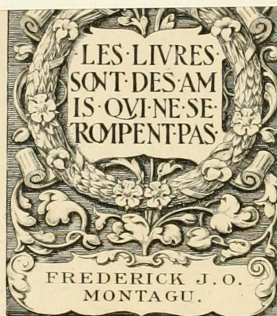






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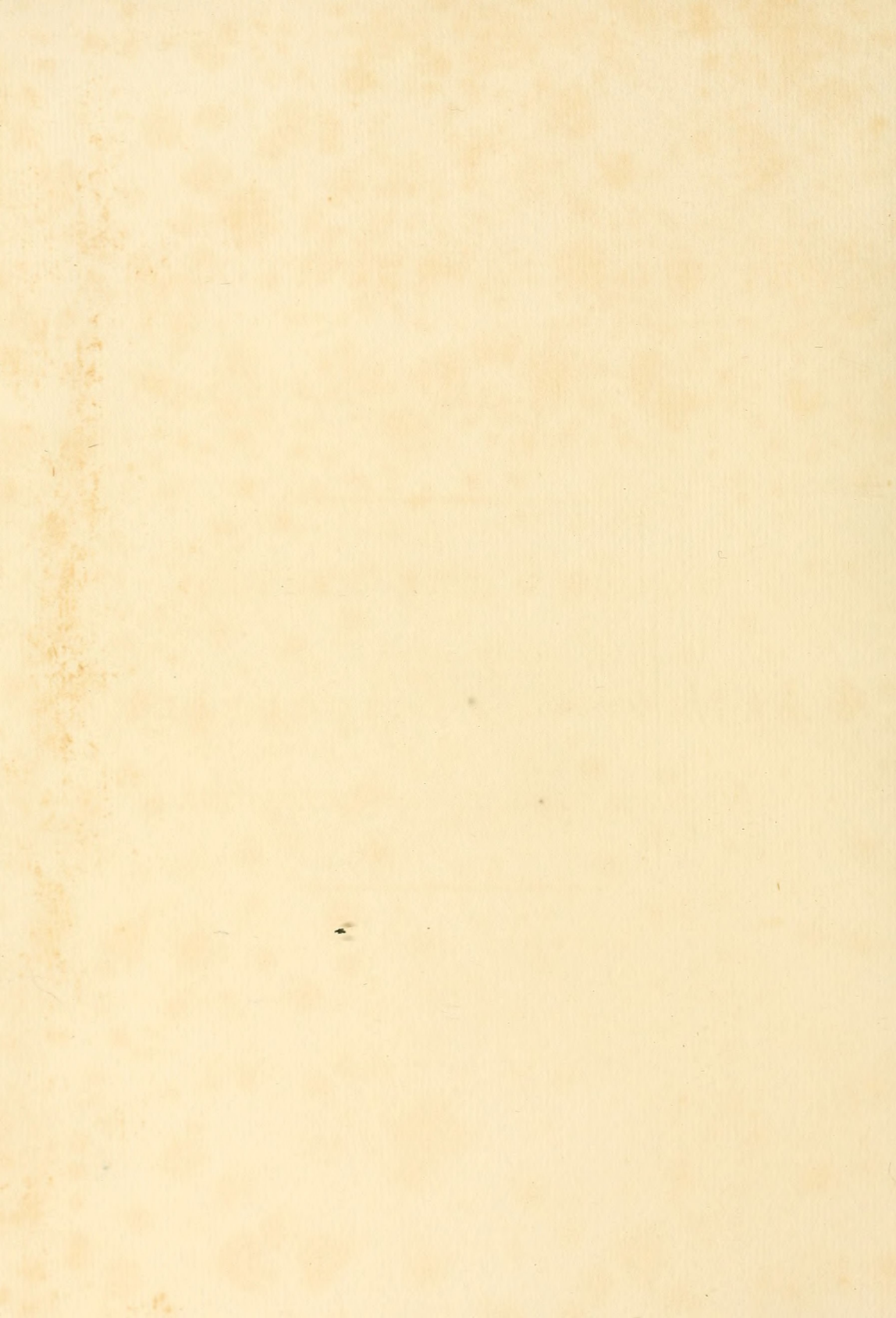
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BISHOP WARBURTON'S

W O R K S.

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VOLUME THE FIFTH:

CONTAINING

SERMONS AND DISCOURSES

O N

VARIOUS SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS.

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Vol. V.

A



T H E  
W O R K S  
O F T H E  
R I G H T R E V E R E N D  
W I L L I A M W A R B U R T O N,  
L O R D B I S H O P O F G L O U C E S T E R.  
I N S E V E N V O L U M E S.

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V O L U M E T H E F I F T H.

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L O N D O N,  
P R I N T E D B Y J O H N N I C H O L S:  
A N D S O L D B Y T. C A D E L L, I N T H E S T R A N D.  
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Preached at Lincoln's-Inn-Chapel, on the first public Fast-day after the Calamity of Lisbon, 1755.

Luke xiii. ver. 1, 2, &c.

*There were present, at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices.*

*And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such Things?*

*I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

*Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*

*I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish, p. 285.*

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Preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords,  
January 30, 1760.

Isaiah xix. ver. 13, 14.

*The Princes of Zian are become Fools, the Princes of Noph are deceived, they have also seduced Egypt—The Lord hath mingled a perverse Spirit in the Midst thereof, p. 299.*

## S E R M O N III.

Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, on Friday, February 21, 1766.

Revelation of St. John, x. ver. 11.

*And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again, before many Peoples, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings, p. 319.*

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Proverbs, xiv. ver. 9.

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Matth. xxii. ver. 12.

*And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding Garment? And he was speechless. Then the King said to his Servants, Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away.—*

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1 Cor. xi. ver. 19.

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Ezekiel xxxvi. ver. 22.

*For thus saith the LORD GOD, I do not this for your Sakes, O House of Israel? But for my Holy Name Sake, p. 401.*

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Matth. iv. ver. 24.

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TRUE CHRISTIANS, THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

Preached before the King, March 12, 1769.

Matth. v. ver. 13.

*Ye are the Salt of the Earth. But if the Salt have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is from thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under Foot, p. 534.*

A RATIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE AND END  
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THE  
P R I N C I P L E S  
OF  
NATURAL AND REVEALED  
R E L I G I O N  
OCCASIONALLY  
OPENED AND EXPLAINED;  
IN A  
COURSE OF SERMONS  
Preached before the  
HONOURABLE SOCIETY  
OF  
L I N C O L N ' S   I N N .

By the Rev. Mr. WARBURTON, Preacher to the Society.



To the Worshipful the  
Masters of the Bench

O F

The Honourable Society

O F

L I N C O L N ' S I N N .

**T**HE following Discourses were preached, and are now published, with a view of vindicating Religion from the insults of Libertines, and the indiscretions of Enthusiasts. Nor will so fair a purpose be at all sullied by the motive I had for this address: which was, only to acknowledge, in the most grateful manner I was able, my obligations to the Bench for the honour done me, at the last vacancy, in the generous offer of the Preacherhip of the Society; as well as for Your constant civilities to me ever since I was honoured with the charge. These Discourses, therefore, such as they are, are humbly offered to You, by,

GENTLEMEN,

*Your most obliged and faithful Servant,*

Lincoln's Inn,  
Nov. 20, 1755.

W. WARBURTON.



# S E R M O N I.

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## THE NATURE AND CONDITION OF TRUTH.

JOHN xviii. ver. 38.

PILATE SAITH UNTO HIM, WHAT IS TRUTH?—  
AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE WENT OUT  
AGAIN.

THE blessed Jesus was had before Pilate as a criminal of State: and the Governor began to question him upon that footing. But when he found the kingdom, which this supposed Criminal was accused of claiming, was one merely spiritual, or, in Pilate's conception, a kingdom only in idea; he considered Jesus as no proper subject of his animadversion. And so far he acted as became his public character.

But his incuriosity or indifference, when TRUTH was offered to be laid before him as a private man, and by one who, he knew, had the repute of exercising every spiritual power necessary to inforce it, shews him in a light much less excusable. The negligent air of his insulting question will hardly admit of an apology. "You tell me, says he, of Truth: a word in the mouth of every

Sectary,

Seſtary, who all agree to give that name to their own opinions. While Truth, if indeed we allow its exiſtence, ſtill wanders at large, and unacknowledged. Nor does it ſeem worth while to realize and fix her abode: for thoſe things which Nature intended for general uſe, are plain and obvious, and within the reach of every man."

Sentiments like theſe characteriſed the ruler of an Aſiatic province, who had heard ſo much of Truth in the ſchools of philoſophy, and to ſo little purpoſe. Pilate, therefore, finding a Jewiſh Sage talk of *bearing witneſs to the truth*, the pretended office of the Grecian Sophiſts, concluded him to be one of their mimic Followers. For it was now become fashionable amongſt the learned Jews to inliſt themſelves into one or other of thoſe ſchools. Thus the famous Philo was an outrageous Platonist: and Jeſus calling himſelf a KING, this, and what was generally known of the purity and ſeverity of his morals, probably made Pilate conſider him as one of the STOICAL WISE MEN, who alone was free, happy, and a King;

Liber, honoratus, pulcher, Rex denique Regum.

Now, as on the one hand, the character of the Greek philoſophy, which was abſtracted and ſequestered from civil buſineſs, made Pilate conclude, that the miniſtry of Jeſus had nothing dangerous or alarming; ſo, on the other, its endleſs enquiries and quarrels about TRUTH, and which of the Sects had it in keeping, made men of the world, and eſpecially thoſe whoſe practice declined the teſt of any moral ſyſtem whatſoever, willing to be perſuaded, and ready to conclude, that this boated Truth, which pretended to regulate and direct human conduct, was indeed no better than a fanciful and ſhifting viſion.

This, I preſume, was the light in which Pilate conſidered the Saviour of the world. Had he ſuſpected Jeſus for the founder of a public Religion, to be erected on the deſtruction of the eſtabliſhed worſhip of the Empire, the jealousies of the Roman Court, ſince the

the change of the Constitution, had doubtless made this servile minister of power very attentive and officious to suppress it in its birth.

But a religion, whose object was the TRUTH, was at this time so unknown a thing, that a Pagan Magistrate could have no conception of it, but as of a new sect of philosophy. All the Religions then in credit had for their object, instead of Truth, public utility; and for their means, instead of Creeds and formulas of faith, only pompous rites and ceremonies. So that if this corrupt Politician did, indeed, regard the doctrine of Jesus as a new Religion, it was such a one as some modern Statesmen have been said to form of it; a sort of *divine philosophy in the mind*; from which, it is true, the governments and politics of this world have little to apprehend. For it was not till Paul *reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, that *Felix trembled*. And had the Gospel, at this time, been represented to Pilate on its practical side, it is probable that he, as any other Statesman, had been in the same condition. But Such can hear talk of the TRUTHS of God unmoved and unimproved, who tremble at his judgments, and anticipate the terrors of his vengeance.

But if the ill usage of Truth by the Philosophers could so disgust the Politician of old, as to make him indifferent to an acquaintance of this importance; What, must we think, will be her treatment amongst modern Statesmen, whose views are neither more pure nor more generous; and whose penetration, perhaps, does not go much beyond the busy men of antiquity; when they see her so freely handled by those amongst us, who call themselves her Ministers, and profess to consecrate her to the service of Religion? Amongst such, I mean amongst the active, no less than amongst the idle part of the fashionable world, Pilate's question is become proverbial, when they would insinuate that TRUTH, like VIRTUE, is nothing but a NAME.

“What is this TRUTH, say they, of which the world has heard so much talk, and hath received so little information? You boast  
of

of it, as the Guide of life, yet still its residence remains unknown. Which would tempt one to suspect, that either there is no such thing; a thing essentially different from falsehood; or that its nature is too fine and subtile for the grosser intellect of man to comprehend. But above all, what is that GOSPEL TRUTH, which its Ministers, in their very attempts to recommend, are wont so much to discredit and abuse? We do not mean that dim Specter or Phantasm of it, which hath so long haunted and possessed the Schools; but, that which you call, its brightest Substance, as it sits enthroned in the hearts of the Faithful. How miserably is this shaken, not only by the dissensions of its Friends, but by every the slightest effort of its Enemies! And while objections to Religion lie plain and level to the capacities of the vulgar; the solution of them requires the utmost stretch of parts and learning to excogitate; and equal application and attention to comprehend. From all this (say they) we are naturally led to conclude, That the Gospel-doctrines are no truths; or at least truths of no general concern; since they are neither uniformly held by those who are employed to teach them; nor subject to the examination of such as are enjoined to receive them."

Something like this, I apprehend, may be the private sentiment of those who have more decently discarded all care and concern about the things of religion.

And as it cannot be denied but that men's acquired passions and appetites have concurred with the constitutional weakness of human nature to form these conclusions against Truth; and especially that best part of truth, Religion; Charity seems to call upon us to detect and lay open the general causes which have given birth to men's prejudices against both.

I. And first, with regard to Truth in the abstract; the various hindrances to its discovery; and mens' backwardness to acquiesce in it, when found.

The

The principal and surest step towards the possession of the Good we seek, is our love and affection for the object. This quickens our industry, and sharpens our attention. So that the LOVE OF TRUTH hath been always recommended by the Masters of wisdom as the best means of succeeding in the pursuit of it. There is hardly any one who suspects he wants this LOVE : and yet, How few are there whom their confidence does not deceive ! We mistake the love of our Opinions for the love of Truth, because we suppose our own opinions true : and yet, for the most part, they have been received upon credit ; and consequently are much more likely to be false. Hence, this imaginary love of Truth proves, in fact, little better than the love of Error : and the affections, being now misplaced, they are a greater impediment to us in the pursuit of Truth than if we had no affections at all concerning it.

How then shall we know when we have this love ? for still it is necessary we should have it, if we would follow Truth to any good purpose. It is difficult to describe what every man must feel for himself ; and yet as dangerous to trust only to our feelings, when the object is so easily mistaken. However, When we set out in search of Truth as of a stranger, and not in search of arguments to support our familiar opinions ; when we possess ourselves in a perfect indifference for every thing but known and attested Truth ; totally regardless of the place from whence it comes, or of that to which it seems to tend ; when the mind, I say, is in this situation, no one, I think, can fairly dispute the reality of its attachment.

1. But our appetites rarely suffer us to observe this strict and rigid conduct. We seek the gratification of our humour even in the laws which should correct it. Hence so many various SYSTEMS OF MORALITY, to suit every man's proper frame of mind, and bent of constitution. The indolent, the active, the sanguine, the phlegmatic, and saturnine, have all their correspondent Theories. Now, inquirers of this turn must needs be admirably qualified for the discovery of Truth ! While just as one or other of the com-

plexions carries him, the man is drawn by a strong, though hidden impulse, into the very centre of his congenial system. And what will be the issue? His concern, from henceforth, is not the trial, but the support of his opinions; which can be no otherwise provided for than by keeping the arguments in favour of them always in view, and by striving to forget whatever seems to have a less indulgent aspect.

2. Prejudices mislead the inquirer no less than his passions. He venerates the Notions he received from his forefathers: He rests in them, upon the authority of such whose judgment he esteems; or, at least, wishes them well, for the sake of the honours and profits he sees attached to the profession of them. Nay, he can persuade himself to patronize what he has once chosen, for reasons still more remote from the conclusions of common sense. He likes them because they are old; because they are new; for being plain and simple; for being sublime and mysterious; for being followed by the Few; for being followed by the Many; in a word, on a thousand other accounts, with which Truth hath no manner of concern. But this must never be forgotten, that, let Prejudice drive from what quarter it will, it is sure to make shipwreck of the Understanding, thus flattered and betrayed.

But then had as this is, Since this too is certainly the case, that the impediments in the pursuit of Truth are not essential but accidental; we may well account for our mistakes in setting out, the slowness of our advance, and the rubs and oppositions in our passage, without having recourse to any sceptical conclusions in favour of the incomprehensible nature of Truth, or the inaccessible situation in which the eternal Author of all things hath placed her. For is this any reason, that because some Truths are so deep that our haste and impatience will not suffer us to sound them; others so disguised that our dissipation will not allow us the attention necessary to discover them; and others again so suspected that our prejudices dispose us to reject them; That because some errors are represented so plausibly as to look like Truth; others seem so

com-

commodious as to be wished Truth ; and others again appear so fashionable as to usurp all the prerogatives due unto it ; Is this, I say, any reason for sober men to conclude, that either there is no difference between what We call Truth and Falsehood ; or that the difference is so insensible that it will not serve us for a distinction ? Our very Senses, in many cases, our Reason in more, and our Hearts in almost all, will convince us of the contrary.

II. We come next to consider the objections to RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

1. And first, with regard to the Ministers of Religion, their passions and their prejudices. It is rather to be lamented than objected to us, that consecration to the service of heaven will not exempt good men from the frailties of humanity. As to the bad, indeed, if it does not aggravate their crimes, at least it renders them more scandalous : and, in general, when the matter is of high concernment, the passions both of good and bad are always, from the common impotence of our nature, proportionably inflamed. Mistaken constancy, or irregular zeal, makes this man tenacious of received opinions : and the obliquer affections of avarice or ambition make that man reverence such as are established. Opposition, likewise, will make both but too much disposed to obtrude what they suspect to be false ; and to secrete what they know to be true. This draws them still further from the road of Truth, while all they seek is to be at distance from one another's Parties and Opinions. So long, therefore, as these interests prevail, the plainest Truths will be disputed, and the most notorious Errors patronized and supported ; the obscurest Principles preferred to the clearest, and the subtlest conclusions take place of the most simple.

2. Inveterate errors concerning the nature and end of God's WRITTEN WORD, errors long since sanctified by time and authority, are another source of those disgraces to which Revelation is become subject. The Gospel is so commonly honoured with the name of TRUTH ; and holy Scripture in general so frequently re-

commended for its capacity of *leading us into all truth*, that men have been apt to regard it as a treasury of Science; and to apply to their Bible for all the principles of human knowledge. And under this delusion, the vain inquirer, to cover the dishonour of a fruitless search, hath always had recourse to that exhaustless fund, the human Imagination; which is ever then most extravagant when Reason is at greatest distance. How miserably, for instance, hath the Mosaic account of the Creation been dishonoured by the wild and jarring expositions of men devoted to this or that sect of PHILOSOPHY or MYSTICISM! Platonists, Materialists, Cartesians, Chemicists, Cabalists, and all the impure fry of physical, philological, and spiritual Enthusiasts, have found their peculiar whimsies supported, and made authentic, in the first and second chapters of the book of GENESIS!

How, again, have the Jewish LAW and the GOSPEL of Jesus been abused by Slaves and Rebels; or by such as were ready to become either; to find, in one, the DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS; and, in the other, the Supremacy and DOMINION OF THE CHURCH!

But amidst all the folly and mischief attending this perversion of the Bible, in support of human systems of Philosophy and Politics, had men only reflected, that, though Scripture be said to be *written to make us wise*, it is added—*unto salvation*\*; they would have sought for the principles of natural and civil knowledge amongst their proper Professors: and have studied Scripture only to investigate that *wisdom which is from above*; and is *first PURE, then PEACEABLE*†: a wisdom, which, at the same time that it enlightens the Judgment, rectifies the Heart; and so takes away all ground of contention both from a perplexed head and a bigotted temper.

III. But the thing which, most of all other, indisposes sceptical men to the truths of Revelation is, “That the small remain of

\* 2 Tim. chap. iii. 15.

† Jam. chap. iii. 17.

SCRIPTURE-TRUTH which the friends and ministers of Religion have left unimpaired, lies a prey to its enemies: obvious (they say,) to a thousand objections; and every objection level to the capacity of the Vulgar: while the solution of them not only requires the best abilities to frame and draw out, but the closest attention likewise to comprehend."

Now, as this is supposed to affect both the nature of Truth in general, and the character of the Gospel in particular, we shall consider it in either light.

1. All objections to Truth must needs be founded in false judgment: False judgment proceeds from ignorance, or a superficial view of things: But this ignorance is the proper allotment of the Vulgar; So that, what arises from thence, as referring to, and consonant with their capacities, cannot but make a quick and easy impression. On the contrary, the solution of these difficulties must needs be formed on a true judgment of things. This judgment springs from a profound view of Nature. But such a view requires a large detail: and the mutual connections and dependencies of things, a strict examination: hence the necessity of time to acquire, and of attention to comprehend. These different properties in OBJECTIONS and SOLUTIONS are so constant and notorious, that the ease of questioning foolishly, and the difficulty of answering wisely, is become proverbial.

Hence we collect, that even admitting Revelation to be true, it would be necessarily attended with the disadvantages here objected to it.

2. In vindication of the character of the GOSPEL it may be replied, That it is one thing to understand the meaning of a truth delivered in a proposition, and another, to comprehend all the reasons on which that truth is founded. The first of these is all that is NECESSARY for man to know: For when God vouchsafed the revelation of himself to the world, he annexed SAVING FAITH to the knowledge and acceptance of clear and simple propositions, such as these, that *Jesus is the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind.*

They

They mistake his Gospel, and alter the terms of his Covenant, who put salvation upon the evidence to be given of the NECESSITY OF A SAVIOUR. The learned Divine, we presume, is able to satisfy all serious inquirers, in both these particulars: But if the reasoning which proves the latter, exceed the capacity of the mere Vulgar, it derogates nothing from Revelation; since the knowledge of that matter makes no part of the terms of our salvation. All, that man can wish should be indulged him, in consideration of his natural infirmities, is indulged him: For the utmost he could desire is, that the Truths, which come proposed to him from God, be plain and consistent; and accompanied with Credentials from the sender. Agreeably hereto, the fundamental doctrines, which the Christian religion objects to our belief, are the existence of one God, the Creator; and his moral government of the world; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, sent by his Father to redeem mankind from sin and misery, and to restore them to eternal life, by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross; and that the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier and enlightener of all those who *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called*. Propositions of the utmost clearness and precision. Nor is the evidence of their original less simple or intelligible; such as the Miracles performed, and the Prophecies fulfilled, in attestation of them.

So admirably fitted for the gross body of mankind, is this Religion, both in its genius and promulgation! No absurd incredibility in Nature, proposed; no blind submission to Authority, required. The doctrines, as clear as they are pure, equally solicit the Understanding and Affections; and are adapted to satisfy the Reason, at the same time that they allure the Will. In a word, enforced with that power and conviction as makes it difficult for an ingenuous mind to reject them, though under cover of that civil (but criminal) dismissal of the Roman Governor.

IV. But then, “If these fundamental articles of the Gospel-covenant were contrived by divine Wisdom, with such simplicity and plainness,

plainness, How came they, it will be asked, to be so delivered as to afford occasion for the inquisitive to start a thousand curious questions, which have no other tendency than to perplex and obscure them." To this, we beg leave to say, that, though, indeed, sacred Scripture, as far as it respects the essentials of the Christian faith, be exceeding clear and simple, yet it does, at the same time, contain many profound, and even impenetrable mysteries. Mysteries, however, which no less manifest the adorable wisdom, than the open doctrines do the abounding goodness of our all-gracious Master.

The Gospel is a Covenant or Transaction of God with Man. The immense distance between the Parties contracting must needs make the several parts of the covenant very dissimilar. So that, if from Man's nature and situation we may expect, that, when God vouchsafes to direct us by a revelation of his WILL, all his commands will be brief, evident, and full; we must, on the like reasoning, conclude from the nature of the other contracting Party, the God of the universe, that when he vouchsafes to instruct Man in the revelation of his TRUTH, there will be some things in the *Covenant of Grace*, which will partake of the sublime obscurity of its Author.

It was the same God who framed the Christian Oeconomy and the Newtonian System. Why therefore should it be matter of objection to the former, and not to the other, that there are many things surpassing human comprehension in both? Is the doctrine of Grace more stupendous than the velocity of Motion given to Light? Or is the incarnation of the Son of God more astonishing than the least possible quantity of Matter sufficient to make a World? If therefore the Newtonian philosophy (which is built on Science) hath revealed and demonstrated the powers of Nature amidst all that darkness; how can we doubt of seeing God in his Gospel, though surrounded with the impenetrable depths of infinity? In a word, I think we might as reasonably conclude against the divine original of the Gospel, if there were no traces of such  
mysterious

myſterious parts, as if there were only ſuch. An unclouded ſplendor, and undiluted obſcurity, equally diſcrediting the Works and Diſpenſations of Heaven.

But, of the dark parts of Revelation there are two ſorts : one, which may be cleared up by the ſtudious application of well-improved talents ; the other, which will always reſide within the ſhadow of God's throne, where it would be impiety to intrude.

However, neither the one nor other make part of the eſſential doctrines of our Faith. The impenetrable nature of the latter totally unfits them for objects of religious belief ; and the difficult comprehension of the former unfits them for becoming objects of the People's. But as it is this ſort only which can afford any reaſonable ground to the objection before us, we ſhall be a little more particular.

The Goſpel profeſſes itſelf to be the completion of one entire System, advancing by a gradual progreſs, through various Ages and People, from the Creation of man to his Redemption. A Diſpenſation of this character cannot but be contrived and conducted on principles of the ſublimeſt wiſdom. So that as, on the one hand, the knowledge of the relations of the parts to one another ; and their various coincidences, and mutual operations, to produce, either their diſtinct, or their united effects, will be extremely difficult ; ſo, on the other, the attainment of this knowledge will be neceſſary, if we aſpire to that full and comprehensive idea of Religion, which can alone enable us to detect and ſatisfy the doubts and cavils of Infidelity.

Now, in this conſiſts the ratio and eſſential grounds of the Goſpel-doctrine ; of which, one would think, the only iſſue ſhould be credit, and glory to the Chriſtian Faith. But unadviſed inquirers exploring the depths of infinite Wiſdom without modeſty and reverence, have given a handle to licentious men to turn theſe proofs, explored improperly, and imprudently inforced, into an argument againſt the divine original of Revelation. And this pretence making its appeal to the ignorance of the Vulgar, is greedily embraced.

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In the mean time, the solution of the cavil demanding an enlarged view of God's moral Oeconomy, acquired by the right application of general knowledge, well digested, we need not wonder, that a better understanding than commonly falls to the share of the People is required to enable us to see the force of such reasoning.

But is this general incapacity any real objection to the truth of our Religion? By no means. It is perfectly agreeable to our ideas of God's moral attributes, that he should inform men of his Will; that he should deliver to them a rule of action, accompanied with the sanctions of a Law: It is as conformable to our ideas of Man's relation to his Maker, that he should receive and observe this Law. Reason, indeed, expects that the delivery of it be attended with these conditions, That the propositions in which it is contained be clear and intelligible; the truths in which it is conveyed, agreeable to the nature of things; and the pretensions of those intrusted with its propagation, confirmed by superior power. Along with this Law is proclaimed the free gift of a general blessing; which the Giver might bestow at his pleasure, as well in one reasonable way as in another.

Has man any more to expect before he vouchsafes to accept this free blessing, or condescends to be governed by this equitable Law? Reason says, No. But Passion and Prejudice stand out. "We want, they cry, to be informed how we came to stand in need of this Salvation. We want to be instructed in the ratio or essential grounds of the doctrine propounded."

Now if divine Wisdom had not thought fit to comply with so bold and insolent a demand, Could we accuse him of being wanting to his favourite Man? Surely we could not. Yet God hath been graciously pleased to humour our caprice. He hath laid open the *depth and riches* of his System so fully, as to enable those, who are duly qualified with human knowledge, to satisfy these demands, and to explain the *why* of his Oeconomy of Redemption.

Will this content us? By no means. "The solution, it is said, is founded in such principles of speculative science as the

“People can never comprehend.” But for this, there is no remedy. The fault, if there be any, lies not in the mode of the religious Dispensation, but in the nature of Truth itself: Which requires much attention of the best gifted and best improved understanding to penetrate to its general principles. Would you have the eternal nature of things altered to gratify your prejudices? Truth, no more than its Author, can sink to the level of your ignorance; but You, by a proper cultivation of your reason, may rise to Truth, may reach its sublimest heights, its residence near the footstool of the Almighty.

“This attempt, you say, the station and condition of the people will never suffer them to make; they have neither leisure to learn, nor opportunities to philosophise.”—Be content then with those simple principles, and plain arguments for Religion, explained above: and have the candour and honesty to own, that, if you want knowledge to judge of the answers of the learned, to infidel objections; you want it equally to judge of the objections themselves; which, therefore, should never indispose you to what you do understand; Principles, which constitute those essential articles of faith by which you must be saved. And if the higher and more intricate truths of Religion exceed your capacity, be assured (if for no other reason than this) that you may be safely ignorant of them. In the concerns of life, about which, men are generally more in earnest than in the affairs of Religion, you take the conclusions of Science upon trust, and erect them into principles: You navigate, you build, you state accounts, and trust to the mathematician for the ratio of those rules by which you work and attain your purpose.

But to this you will say, “It is true, indeed, that in the common affairs of life, men go on upon trust; but then uniform experience shews, they are in no danger of being deceived; for the constant success attending the operations, thus conducted, assures them, that the rules by which they act are deduced from principles of Truth.”—And is that FAITH and OBEDIENCE, which  
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constitute us the Disciples of Christ, less uniformly productive of good? Did Faith ever violate civil peace; or Obedience impair domestic felicity? In vain you tell us of that frantic Zeal, of that dire Superstition, which have set whole Kingdoms in a flame, and desolated private Houses. The first mischief they always do is to corrupt FAITH and OBEDIENCE: and after this, to charge upon these, the evils caused by their destroyers, is adding mockery to injustice.

And here let me observe, that the Founders of our holy Faith were in this, as in all other parts of their conduct, truly admirable. What they chiefly insisted on to the People at large, was the BELIEF of a few simple propositions, as necessary to Salvation. When they addressed themselves to such Particulars who were fitly qualified and rightly disposed, such who have heads to distinguish, and hearts to chuse the right, they as warmly recommend EXAMINATION, *to search the Scriptures, and to try all things.* Yet the only use a late writer could find in so sage and generous a conduct was to turn it to abuse, in a piece of profane drollery, called *Christianity not founded on argument.* An egregious exploit! and worthy the Author's charitable views; the mock consolation of Fanatics, and the sly merriment of Sceptics and Unbelievers.

But now, we are stopt short and told, that all our pains might have been well spared; for that the necessity of these profound defenses, so much embroiling the learned and embarrassing the Vulgar, doth not arise from the nature of truth, but from the folly or knavery of its Advocates. “It is astonishing (says the Ob-  
 “jector) how Divines could take so much silly pains to establish  
 “mystery on metaphysics, revelation on philosophy, and matters  
 “of fact on abstract reasoning. A Religion founded on the autho-  
 “rity of a divine Mission, confirmed by prophecies and miracles,  
 “appeals to fact: and the facts must be proved as all other facts,  
 “that pass for authentic, are proved. If they are thus proved,  
 “the Religion will prevail without the assistance of so much pro-

“found reasoning\*.” To which I reply, That, had this charge on the Divines been well founded, the objection would yet have been uncandid and disingenuous. For who were they that drew the Divines into metaphysics, philosophy, and abstract reasoning, but these Objectors themselves? And on what occasion, but this?—The advocates of Revelation did not want to be told that a “Religion founded on the authority of a divine Mission, and confirmed by prophecies and miracles, appeals to facts,” and was to be proved by human evidence: For in reality, by FACTS they had already proved it: And with such force and Evidence, that unbelievers were driven from their Objections to the Facts, and reduced to take refuge in Philosophy—“You press us with facts (say they) and the testimony of antiquity: supports too slender to bear the unnatural load of REVELATION! A thing impossible in itself, as it opposes the established order of Providence: A thing impossible under the Bible representation of it, as several passages in that book directly oppose our common notions of God’s Attributes.”—In this strait, what was to be done, but either to confess the force of the objection; or, by the aid of that *metaphysics, philosophy, and abstract reasoning*, which the last objection appeals to, and which the other condemns, to shew its futility and weakness. For the constitution of nature cannot be explained without metaphysics; and the Attributes of God cannot be confronted with his supposed commands, without the use of abstract reasoning. And yet, for submitting to this necessity, for undergoing this drudgery, the Divines are upbraided, ridiculed, and turned into contempt. And by whom? By the very men who occasioned the distress, and defied them to get out of it.

Nor is this the worst. The Divines are represented as applying their “metaphysics, philosophy, and profound reasoning, to prophecies and miracles.” How gross the misrepresentation! They had more wit, they had more honesty (I speak not here, nor does

\* L. B’s Letters concerning the study and use of History.

the Objector, of two or three crack-brained visionaries), than to take so much *filly pains*. They applied this reasoning as became them; not to matter of **FACT**, but of **RIGHT**. It was pretended, that God could not give a Revelation; that he could not select a chosen People; that he could not accept a vicarious atonement. And against these bold assertions, the Christian Divine directed all the force and evidence of true Philosophy.—With what success, the latest posterity shall tell with gratitude.

V. But it is not only from what lies hid, but from what hath been discovered, that the enemies of our Faith can raise objections to its discredit. If, in these later times, it hath been pretended, that a more rational idea of God's dispensations hath been proposed; if the various genius, the comparative excellence, the mutual dependence, the reciprocal illustrations of the several Parts, and the gradual progress of the Whole towards perfection, have been investigated with a penetration, solidity, and precision unknown to those ages which time alone hath taught us to esteem venerable; if, I say, this hath been pretended; We are then asked, "How it came to pass, that Truths, so sublime and useful, should have lain hid till now; When the light of the Spirit was sent so early, and had illuminated the Church so long? How it came to pass, they were denied to the best times; and, after a long course of ages, reserved as a reward for the very worst?"—And when they have asked this, to discredit **OLD** truths; they can, in order to increase the prejudices against them, join with bigots, how inconsistently soever, to decry the **NEW**.

To this objection, it is sufficient to reply, That the promise and gift of the **SPIRIT** may be considered either as it concerned the first propagators of the Word; or as it concerned the teachers and hearers of it ever since. As to the immediate disciples of Christ, there is no doubt of their being abundantly enlightened for the work of their ministry; whether it was in making converts, in founding churches, or in composing those occasional instructions, by which  
Christians

Christians of all ages may improve the current benefits they receive from the assistance of the same Spirit.—And that assistance is the second point we are to consider.

Now the endowment of Grace is, in this respect, just the same with every common endowment of Nature; of little advantage without our co-operation! God hath given men hands and feet, to procure good and to avert evil. But the benefit does not operate like a charm; it is to our dextrous application of the members that we owe all the advantages arising from their use. So it is in the free-gift of the Spirit: it was bestowed upon us to enlighten the Understanding, to assist the Judgment, and to redress the disorders of the Will. But if either we refuse to exert these faculties, or will direct them to improper objects, the use and efficacy of Grace must surely be defeated. These reflections will enable us to give a reasonable account how it might happen, that very important truths, concerning God's moral Dispensations, may have remained hid for ages, and yet be reserved (to the greater glory of his Gospel in its greatest need), for the discovery of these worse and latter times.

This supposed ordonance, in the œconomy of Grace, may receive credit from what is confessed to have happened in the œconomy of Nature.

The power, wisdom, and goodness of the Author of the System to which we belong, is so clear and evident from every obvious configuration of Matter surrounding us, that it cannot escape the notice of the most inattentive, or lie concealed from the most ignorant. Hence a God, the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of the world, is the concurrent voice of Nature.

NOW CREATION and GOVERNMENT, from which the morality of human actions is deduced, are the great principles of NATURAL RELIGION. So that God could not be said to have been wanting in the discovery of himself to the lowest of his reasonable creatures. Yet though the obvious marks of his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, thus obtrude themselves upon all men; it is certain that a  
well-

well-directed study, in the contemplation of the great book of Nature, opens to us such stupendous wonders of his Power, such awful scenes of his Wisdom, and such enchanting prospects of his Goodness, as exceed all conception of the unlettered and un-instructed Spectator. Some faint taste of these beauties, the more Inquisitive enjoyed very early: But their successors, by too much indulging to SPECULATION, and allowing too little to EXPERIENCE, instead of finding a real, invented an infinite variety of ideal Worlds; all as dishonourable to the Author of Nature as distant from his Truth. At length, men grew wiser by the follies of those who went before them; and a different method of studying Nature was invented and pursued; in which Fancy was excluded, and Fact only allowed for a solid ground of physical progression. From this time, Science advanced; the veil of Nature was drawn aside; and her sacred Mysteries exposed to the open admiration of all men.

This was the case in the System of Nature. The System of Grace seems to run exactly parallel.

The great principles of Revealed Religion are FAITH and OBEDIENCE: And these are clearly and fully taught in the Gospel; and are alone sufficient to *make men wise unto salvation*. But we should greatly derogate from God's Moral government, not to suppose it abounding with the like mysterious wonders as the Natural. And to the study of these, there were more calls, and much better opportunities. The knowledge of God's moral Dispensation is the duty of every man; and more especially of the Ministers of Religion: So that partly on account of the importance of the subject; partly to enable us to oppose ourselves to the malice and sophistry of the enemy; but principally in obedience to the command, to *study the Scriptures*; it has, from the first ages of Christianity down to these times, been one of the principal occupations of the Learned. Yet what through unfavourable circumstances in the Civil and Literary world; what through the bias of inveterate prejudices; but, above all, from the oblique interests and turbulent passions of  
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the inquirers themselves ; the various systems of Religion, invented by Divines, and which all pretend to find in Scripture, have dishonoured the Redemption of mankind near as much as those of the Philosophers had dishonoured the Creation of the universe : till here, as in the other case, the same spirit of prudence and sobriety, which taught men the true method of treating the things of Nature, by a careful study of the volume of creation, led them into the right way of treating the things of God, by a careful study of the volume of Redemption. So that if, in these times, the advances in the knowledge of God's WILL should haply prove as considerable as those in the discovery of his WORKS, it will not be beside a reasonable expectation ; as similar means are always likely to produce similar effects.

We have placed these correspondent histories of the progress of the human mind, in NATURE and GRACE, thus near one another, that, by comparing the parts of them together in the same view, we may see whether there be any objections to the truth of new discoveries in religious matters that do not equally hold against the truth of new discoveries in natural ; of which, for their newness alone, no man ever yet entertained the least suspicion.

First, then, as to God's primary discovery of his Nature in the great book of Creation, compared to the discovery of his Will in the volume of his written word, we may observe his goodness in either case to be equally conspicuous. In the former, a man need but open his eyes to see the Divinity in every object ; in the latter, he who *runs may read* the means and method of his own Salvation : In neither, is any thing wanting, that is necessary, to instruct the most ignorant in their dependance, and their duty. For further information in the works and ways of Providence, God wisely reserved it for the reward of the manly and virtuous improvement of the Understanding.

It is true, in fact, that throughout a vast series of ages, neither of these Inquirers made any very considerable advances in real know-

knowledge: but it is as true, that the impediments, in both cases, proceeded not from any difficulties in the nature of the things inquired after, but from the wrong methods employed in the search. Instead of endeavouring to find out the real constitution of things from the frame of God's works, as they are objected to our senses; or the nature of Revelation from the study of the word, as conveyed to us in Scripture; they invented imaginary Systems out of their own slender stock of Nothing; and then, by wresting and distorting, forced Nature and the Bible to father this shadowy and spurious issue.

But both Divines and Philosophers, when they became convinced of their follies, and, in consequence of that conviction, proceeded with more modesty, as well as better sense, to renounce their fanciful Hypotheses, and to erect Theories on the real constitution of things, Both, I say, made great advances in natural and religious truth.

These two important studies, therefore, being alike circumstanced, and having run the same fortune, demand, in all reason, the same judgment to be passed on their pretences.

But, alas! we are not accustomed to be thus equitable. One of the principal sources of human errors is the drawing different conclusions from the same principles.

It is confessed, that the book of Nature is so plain and clear, that every sentence names and reveals its Author: that if less obvious Truths have lain a long time concealed, it was men's own fault, in adhering to a perverse method of inquiry; and that when afterwards a better was invented, and they began to apply it with more care and sobriety, knowledge opened and enlarged itself proportionably: while the sudden blaze of light which followed, was so far from making Truth suspected, that it dissipated all those doubts which had before been held of its obscure and equivocal nature.

But now if we turn from Physical to Religious inquiries, we shall find, that the very contrary inference hath been drawn from all the same circumstances. Because men had been long unsuccessful in the discovery of the higher truths of Religion, not only these, so lately found and so difficultly comprehended, but even the most obvious principles, early delivered and generally received, have been rendered doubtful and suspected.

But there is another sort of Men, the pretended friends indeed of Religion, who, from too great reverence for things established, have joined with such as have too little, in decrying all NOVELTIES in religious matters.

These Men, abhorring the vanity to be thought wiser than their forefathers, have in express terms declared their displeasure at *making* what they call *experiments in Religion*.

Divines, it is true, have long disputed how *experiments in Religion* should be made. Some would employ Scripture alone; others were for taking in Fathers and Councils; and a third sort for applying raillery and ridicule to the process. But, till of late, every man was for some *experiment* or other. For what is *making experiments* but (as we have just shewn) illustrating Revelation by new arguments arising from new discoveries made in the order, fitness, and harmony of the various dispensations of Religion amongst themselves, just as Philosophers (of whom the word is borrowed) unfold nature by new discoveries made, from repeated trials, in the contents of bodies.

*No experiments in Religion* is indeed the Language of Statesmen (for in some things bigotry and politics agree, as extremes run easily into one another by their very attempts to keep at distance), because, according to the Politician's Creed, Religion being useful to the state, and yet only a well-invented fiction, all *experiments*, that is, all enquiries into its truth, naturally tend, not to confirm, but to unsettle this necessary support of civil Government.

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But, for one who believes Religion to come from God to be frightened with the danger of *experiments*, is to take his friend for his enemy, the most ridiculous of all panic terrors.

One might reasonably ask such a one how it comes to pass that *experiments*, of so sovereign use in the knowledge of Nature, should be calculated to make such havock in Religion? Are not both the works of God? Were not both given for Man's contemplation? Have not both, as proceeding from the common Master of the Universe, their depths and obscurities? And doth not the unfolding the mysteries of moral government tend equally, with the displaying the secrets of the natural, to the advancement of God's glory, and the happiness of Man? In a word, had no experiments been made in Nature, we had still slept in the shade, or wandered in the labyrinth of School Philosophy; and, had *no experiments been made in Religion*, we had still kept blundering on in the rugged and dark paths of School-divinity.

To end as we began, with the instruction afforded by my text. What reason seems to require of us is this; That if yet we know not THE TRUTH, we should seek it of those who do: and if the plain and simple principles of it will not serve our turn, but that we will needs philosophize, and demand a reason for every thing, that at least we stay for an Answer; and stay, too, till we understand it, before we venture to pronounce the Religion of our country to be nothing but a mere human imposition.

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## S E R M O N II.

### GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

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PSALM cXLIV. ver. 3.

**LORD, WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU TAKEST KNOWLEDGE OF HIM ?  
OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU MAKEST ACCOUNT OF HIM ?**

**T**HUS the holy Prophet, seized with a sacred horror at an **UNIVERSE** stretched out through the immensity of boundless Space ; and with a rapturous gratitude for that **GOODNESS** who has graced his favourite Man with so tender and so intimate a regard.

Meditations of this kind are, indeed, most obvious and affecting. The **RELIGIONIST** and the **MAN OF THE WORLD** have equally employed them to reduce Humanity to its just value ; though for very different purposes ; the first, to excite religious gratitude in others ; the second, to encourage himself in an impious **NATURALISM**.

When the Religionist compares this small Spot of earth to the whole of its System ; and sees a number of primary and secondary planets,

planets, habitations like his own, if he may judge by probable analogy, rolling round with it, and performing their various revolutions about one central fire, the common source of light and warmth to all, He is abashed at the mean and diminished rank his own world bears in this solemn and august assembly.

When, by the aid of improved Astronomy, he compares this subastral œconomy with the systems of the fixed stars; every one of which reigns a Sun, directing and influencing the revolutions of its attendant planets; and sees that, as the Earth is but a point compared to the orb of Saturn, so the orb of Saturn itself grows dimensionless when compared to that vast extent of space which the stellar-solar Systems possess and occupy; This Lord of the creation shrinks suddenly from his height, and mingles with the lowest croud of unheeded and undistinguished Beings.

But when, by the further aids of science, he understands, that a new *Host of Heaven*, too remotely stationed for the naked sight to draw out and review, hath been made to issue into day; each of which shining strangers is the Leader of a troop of others, whose borrowed lustre, too weakly reflected, no assistance of art can bring forward; and that still, when sense stops short, science pursues the great discovery, and reason carries on the progress through the mighty regions of boundless space; the fatigued imagination, tracing system after system, as they rise to light in endless succession, turns frightened back upon itself, and overwhelms the labouring mind with terror and astonishment: whence, it never can disengage itself till it rises on the wings of FAITH, which bear this humbled creature from himself, and place him before the throne of God; where he sees the mysteries of that Providence laid open, whose care and bounty so magnificently provides for the meanest of his creatures.

Thus piously affected is the Religionist with the sacred horrors of this amazing scene; an universe stretched out through the wide regions of space, and terminated on all sides by the depths of infinity.

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But let us turn now to the Man of the world, whom this view of things, rather **DEGRADES** than **HUMBLES**. Calmly contemplative in the chair of false science, he derides the mistaken gratitude of the benighted Religionist; a gratitude rising not on reason, but on pride. "For whether, says he, we consider this earth, the mansion of evil, or man its wretched inhabitant, What madness is it to suppose, that so sordid a corner, and so forlorn an occupant, can be the centre of God's moral government? What but the lunacy of self-love could make this short-lived reptile, shuffled hither as it were by Fate, and precariously sustained by Fortune, imagine himself the distinguished care, and the peculiar Favorite of Heaven? As well, says he, might the blind inhabitants of an ant-hill, which chance had placed on the barren frontier of an extended Empire, flatter themselves with being the first object of their monarch's policy, who had unpeopled those mighty deserts only to afford room and safety for their busy colonies. The most, that reasoning pride can tempt us to presume is, that we may not be excluded from that general providence, governing by laws **MECHANICAL**, and, once for all, impressed on matter when it was first harmonized into systems. But to make God the **MORAL**, that is, the close, the minute and immediate inspector into human actions, is degrading him from that high rank in which this philosophy of enlarged creation hath so fitly placed him: and returning him to the people, travestied to the mortal size of local Godship: under which idea, the superstitious vulgar have been always inclined to regard the Maker and Governor of the World."

Thus widely distant are the conclusions of the philosopher, from the sentiments of the religious man.

But who are the enlarged thinkers, and on which side reason declares, it is the purpose of this discourse to inquire: Where, we trust, it will be found, that Man notwithstanding the vast distance between him and his Creator, is indeed the subject of God's **MORAL** government, just as instinct prompts him to hope, and religion directs him to believe.

I. If from the difference of intrinsic dignity, and native worth in the CREATURE, we can conclude aught concerning the proportioned degrees of nearness in which it stands to its Creator, we shall be forced to give the place of honour to MIND above MATTER.

We are dazzled with the pomp and splendor of a visible Creation : and the august forms of material things hinder us from discerning the despicable qualities of that substance out of which they are fashioned. But view this substance well, and we shall find, that what philosophers call the INERTNESS of Matter, a quality essential to it, places it in the very lowest class of what we can conceive of Being. So that were it not for the virtue of ATTRACTION, a thing foreign and extrinsic to it, Matter would be totally unfit for all the known purposes of its Creation.

To make Matter, therefore, any way considerable, its accumulated bulk must supply for its inherent baseness. And yet the best Philosophy, proceeding on geometric principles, hath informed us, that possibly all the solid matter in the universe may be comprized within a narrowness of limit\* still more astonishing than even that immensity through which we find it dilated and expanded.

Thus MATTER carries in it no further marks or notice of a creating Hand, than an aptitude of falling back into nothing on the withdrawing the influence of that power which brought it into

\* See Newton's Opt. p. 243. Octavo Edition.—“The Sagacity of our author [Newton] (says Dr. Pemberton, in his excellent View, &c.) has discovered a method by which—the least portion of matter may be wrought into a body of any assigned dimensions how great soever, and yet the pores of that body none of them greater than any the smallest magnitude proposed at pleasure ; notwithstanding which, the parts of the body shall so touch, that the body itself shall be hard and solid. Which shews that this whole Globe of Earth, nay all the known bodies in the universe together, as far as we know, may be compounded of no greater a portion of solid matter than might be reduced into a Globe of one inch only in diameter, or even less.” View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy, p. 355, 356.

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being. While, on the contrary, a rational MIND presents us with the strongest and brightest image \*, it is possible for a Creature to reflect of its Creator. It partakes of that divine virtue, the power of agency within itself. It has a capacity of imagination to turn its regard from the present, to the past and future; an ability of judgment to examine and rectify the informations of sense; and a freedom of Will to give morality to all its thoughts and actions.

But besides this obvious superiority of Mind over Matter in the nature of their essences; there is as sensible a difference in the ends of their Creation, or in the effects produced by the exertion of their several qualities. The material world was made but for the sake of the intellectual; and consequently it is not to be supposed, that MORAL GOVERNMENT, which regards the end, should be neglected; while NATURAL GOVERNMENT, which concerns only the means, should ingross the whole of the Ruler's attention. With respect to the effects produced, Mind will, here again, have the same advantage; moral fitnesses having a greater intrinsic excellence than natural: for Matter being devoid of consciousness, the end of the Natural is only good effected; while the end of the Moral is good felt and enjoyed.

Mind, therefore, cannot but engage the care of Providence; which is confessed to superintend the movements of that Matter, whose combinations ultimately regard only mind and Intelligence.

But what makes fastidious reason so averse to the idea of God's moral government, when it so easily admits his Natural, is that in this latter case, systems are thought to be sustained and kept in order only by the general laws of mechanism, impressed on Matter at its Creation; or by certain powers lodged within it, to mold it into form, to push it into motion, and to give the true bias to its operations: so that here, the Deity works neither immediately nor particularly, but leaves every thing to the government of those ge-

\* Gen. chap. i. ver. 26.

neral Laws, or at least to the administration of that secondary power, or Plastic Nature, which superintends the execution of his Laws: while he himself, the sovereign Lord of Being, descends not from his high estate, nor suffers his supremacy to be degraded by a minute attendance on every particle of body; or polluted by an intimate contact with gross impure materiality. On the other hand, they see, moral government must be conducted on different principles. For it's subject being free agency, and it's object the direction of the effects which such an agency produceth, the attention of the Deity must be instant, immediate, and particular; the relations of Master and Servant, of Lord and Subject, necessarily implying the most close and constant intimacy.

But what shall we say, if the indisposition to God's moral government, on account of this difference, be a mere prejudice? An indisposition not derived from Nature, but the false explanations of it's phænomena, obtruded on us by vain system-makers? Indeed, this supposed distance and separation of the great Artist from his Work, after having once set the Machine a-going by the first impression of his general Laws, is the gratuitous conclusion of a talking Philosophy: The later, and more correct inquiries into the material system, on the unerring experience of the Newtonian physics, have clearly discovered, that God is intimately present to every particle of Matter, at every point of Space, and in every instance of Being. For a *VIS INERTIÆ*, or resistance to the change of it's present state, being an essential quality of Matter, and inconsistent with any motive, force, or power in that Substance, all those effects commonly ascribed to a certain essence residing in it, such as gravity, attraction, elasticity, repulsion, or whatever other tendencies to Motion are observed in Matter, are not powers naturally belonging to it, or what can possibly be made inherent in it. So that these qualities, without which, Matter would be utterly unfit for use, must needs be produced by the immediate influence of the first Cause, incessantly performing, by his almighty finger,

the minutest office in the Material Oeconomy ; working still near us, round us, within us, and in every part of us.

If, then, in the Natural government of the world, the immediate, the incessant influence of the workman on his work in general, through all its systems up to the whole ; and, in particular, through all its lesser portions down even to the minutest atom, be necessary to enable Matter to perform its functions ; there is no reason to revolt against that close connexion necessarily supposed between the Creator and Creature, in God's Moral government ; or to wonder that the order of Rationals should be honoured with the same immediate presence, the same degree of nearness and intimacy, with which the Godhead visits the whole inanimate creation.

II. Hitherto, we have endeavoured to affirm the reality of God's Moral government here below, by considerations drawn from the nature of the Creature. Let us now turn to the CREATOR ; and see if those things which human reason discovers of his ATTRIBUTES do not farther contribute to establish this important truth.

But we have been told, and with airs of superior knowledge, that these pretended attributes, as they are commonly specified, and distinguished into natural and moral, are a mere human fiction ; invented, by aid of analogy, from the actions, passions, and qualities observable in man : And that the simple nature of Deity is one uniform perfection ; of which, infinity being the base, we can have no distinct idea or conception.

To this, it will be sufficient to reply, That it is indeed true, that these specific attributes, from which we deduce all our knowledge of the Nature and Will of God, are formed on analogy, and bear relation to ourselves. But then, we say, such attributes are not on that account the less real or essential. The light of the SUN is not in the orb itself what we see it in the RAINBOW. There it is one candid, uniform, perfect blaze of glory : Here, we separate its perfection, in the various attributes of red, yellow, blue, purple, and what else the subtle optician so nicely distinguishes.

But

But still, the solar-light is not less real in the rainbow, where its rays become thus untwisted, and each differing thread distinctly seen, than while they remain united and incorporated with one another, in the Sun. Just so it is with the divine Nature: It is one simple individual perfection in the Godhead himself: But when refracted and divaricated, in passing through the human Mind, it becomes Power, Justice, Mercy; which are all separately and adequately represented to the Understanding.

I shall venture, therefore, to consider the divine perfection, as thus reduced and unfolded to human contemplation, under the name of Attributes, without any fear of mistaking shadows for realities.

And here, I say, that the Natural attributes of the Deity, considered as Creator and Lord (and with these relations only, the Religionist has to do) may be comprised in those of POWER and WISDOM: His Moral, in those of JUSTICE and GOODNESS.

Now I hold, that though the idea of his natural attributes be as clear, in the abstract, as that of his moral; yet the idea of his moral attributes is, in the concrete, more adequate than that of his natural\*.

The reason seems convincing. The moral relation in which we stand to God, as free Agents, is just the same whether man exists alone, or whether he be but a link in the chain of innumerable orders of Intelligences surrounding the whole Creation. Hence

\* What is here said may enable us to form a proper judgment of the following censure.—“I would not say, God governs by a rule, that we know, or may know, as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the justice of his proceedings towards them; which a famous Divine hath impiously advanced in a pretended *Demonstration of his being and attributes*. God forbid! But this I may say, that God does always that which is FITTEST to be done. And that this fitness, whereof neither that presumptuous dogmatist was, nor any created being is, a competent Judge, results from the various natures and more various relations of things. So that as Creator of ALL SYSTEMS, by which these natures and relations are constituted, he prescribed to himself the rule which he follows, AS GOVERNOR OF EVERY SYSTEM OF BEING.”—Lord Bolingbroke's Idea of a Patriot King, printed 1749, p. 94.

we must needs have a just and full knowledge of our duty to him, and of his disposition towards us : On which knowledge is founded, the exactness of our conceptions of his Moral attributes, his JUSTICE and GOODNESS. But the natural relation in which we, or any of God's creatures, stand towards him, as Material Beings, is not the same, when considered simply, as when a portion of a dependent and connected Whole. Because, whenever such a Whole exists, the harmony and perfection of it must first of all be consulted. This harmony ariseth from the mutual subserviency and union of its parts. But this subserviency may require a ministration of government, with regard to certain portions of matter thus allied, different from what might have followed had those portions stood alone ; because that precise disposition, which might be fit in one case, might be unfit in the other. Hence we who know there is a Whole, of which our material system is a part, and yet are totally ignorant both of its nature and extent, can have but a very confused idea of that physical relation in which we stand towards God. So that our conceptions of his natural Attributes, his POWER and WISDOM, which are founded on that idea, must, in the concrete, be proportionably vague and inadequate.

Shall we, then, confide in that information which our less adequate ideas of God's power and wisdom afford us of his natural government ; and yet reject that which our more adequate ideas of his justice and goodness give us of his moral government ? We understand both, and rightly, as assuring us that he presides both in the one and in the other Oeconomy. But let us not forget, that this information is conveyed to us with very different degrees of clearness and precision. A difference, on the side of moral government above natural, in proportion as our knowledge of God's moral attributes is less vague and inadequate than our knowledge of his natural.

III. Thus far from a separate consideration of the CREATOR and his WORKS. Let us see, in the last place, whether the same Truth may not be further supported from a joint view of BOTH of them together.

The

The idea of an immensely extended Universe tempts weak reason, deluded by sense and narrowed by prejudice, to suspect that this point of space, in which man exists, may well escape a busied Ruler, who has innumerable Worlds upon his hands. We do not reflect, that the same reasoning, which leads us to conclude that a point of space may be overlooked in God's providence, piercing through infinite extension, would lead us to conclude, that there may be points of time, throughout infinite duration, which likewise escaped his attention. Yet the absurdity of this, we feel: Why not then of the other? The reason is, because the portions of Time rise only in succession; whereas all the parts of space exist together.

But this IMMENSITY, in which bewildered man considers himself as absorbed and lost, will, on due reflection, evince the very contrary to what it is brought to prove. Were Creation not thus widely extended, the infinity of its Author might perhaps seem less evident. And how far the influence or power of a Being not infinite might reach would be yet more uncertain. But a boundless creation shews its Author to be infinite: So that the remaining question concerning the extent of Providence will amount to this, Whether an infinite Being can extend his care to every the minutest portion of an Universe to which we can set no bounds. A question which will hardly deserve an answer.

“ But (say these objectors) the moral system wants one essential mark of divine superintendence, which is ORDER; and this the natural very eminently bears. The Sun keeps its first appointed station; the Planets perform their accustomed revolutions; each Element preserves its distinct properties; and all nature concurs to produce that harmony, with which things set out, when God honoured his rising Creation with the attribute of Good. But Man deflected early from his primeval righteousness, and felt the miseries of a depraved system ere he had fully tasted the blessings which flow from the rectitude of the Will, and from the even balance of the Affections. And what he so early lost, Time has never yet been able

able to restore ; so that he is likely to continue the same forlorn abandoned creature throughout the whole of his existence."

But these Objections are as vague as they are stale. We have been accustomed to talk at random of the ORDER of natural things ; and we suffer ourselves to aggravate the DISORDERS of the Moral.

We can judge but very imperfectly of the whole of the material system. For how small is the portion of Body objected to our view ! and how fleeting the period of time allotted for our study !

We see indeed, perpetual peace and concord in our own solar World ; but we know little of the astral systems, innumerable and remote. And the little we do know gives cause of suspicion that all there is not so regular and constant, as analogy to what we find here, would tempt us to conclude. New stars have suddenly shone out ; and have as suddenly disappeared : Phænomena, which look either like eccentric stars in the Courses of those bodies, or destructive revolutions in their Natures. Nor are we without some appearances in our own System, to give countenance to these suspicions in the more remote. Perhaps the Ring of Saturn may be no other than a less irregular fragment of a crushed and broken Globe. The wounds, our own Earth hath formerly received, are yet deep and ghastly ; which though skinned over by time and human culture, are seen, by those who pry the least beyond its surface, to bear all the marks and memory of a ruined world.

But to turn from these supposed flaws and maims in some of the parts, to the acknowledged perfections of the general System. Its order and harmony, it must be owned, speak most fully to the sustaining power of its Lord and Master : yet those who have penetrated deepest into its mysteries \* have discovered rooted evils and growing disorders, scarce sensible, indeed, at present, but what, in

\* — " While Comets move in very eccentric orbs in all manner of positions, blind fate could never make all the planets move one and the same way in orbs concentric ; some inconsiderable irregularities excepted, which may have arisen from the mutual actions of Comets and Planets upon one another ; and which will be apt to increase till this system wants a reformation." Newton's Opt. 4th edit. p. 378.

time, and without the intervening hand of its Maker, will render the frame of nature altogether unfit for the purposes of its general destination.

It is true, it may be said, "That these proceed slowly and insensibly, while moral disorders infect at once, and rush like a torrent over the fair bosom of Creation."

The thing perhaps is too true: but the inference is unjust. This difference is not to be ascribed to a contrary conduct in the Governor, but to the contrary natures of the subjects.

Passive Matter being totally inert, its resistance to the Laws impressed upon it must be extremely weak: and consequently the disorders arising from that resistance, proportionably slow and unheeded: while that active self-moving principle, the Mind, flies out at once from the centre of its direction, and can, every moment, deflect from the line of truth and reason. Hence moral disorders began early, became presently excessive, and have continued through all ages to disturb the harmony of the System.

Nor are the different methods employed by Providence, for the reform of either system, less distinguishable, than the different qualities of Mind and Matter, which occasioned so wide a distance in the progress of their several disorders: as may be seen by comparing them together. From whence it will appear that the disorder and the reform of that disorder, in either subject, are wisely proportioned to one another.

When the inertness of MATTER hath occasioned irregularities in the corporeal system, it hath no ability in itself to redress them. They must go on, though slowly, from bad to worse, till disabled nature calls upon the hand of God for an extraordinary reformation.

But MIND, is ever applying remedies to its own distempers. First, by the check put to them by the stimulation of opposite passions and affections; for the appetites are incessantly defeating one another's natural tendencies, and perpetually producing contrary effects. So avarice restrains luxury; self-interest withholds injustice;

injustice ; and sloth quenches ambition : So revenge and hatred procure public justice ; treachery often prevents a national destruction ; and envy and opposition to power produces a fage and cautious administration.

Thus the jarring interests of corrupt passion keep moral evil within moderate bounds, and give time and opportunity to the mind to recover the government and direction of itself ; in the regulation of the appetites and reformation of the will : And this is the second way the mind has of procuring remedies for its own distempers.

In these different methods of reforming either system, the divine goodness is equally displayed ; only his power is more visibly exercised in the one, and his wisdom in the other. When blind Matter deviates, as nothing but the conducting hand of God can bring her back into the road of Nature, so the force attending that reduction is so far from impairing her essential virtue that it heals and restores it. But the like intervention with a rational Agent would impinge upon his freedom. God has therefore so admirably contrived, in the disposition of his moral System, that it should be able to restore itself ; by making its very disorders contribute to its reform, in the check the vicious passions give to one another's operations ; and in the opportunities with which time supplies the Mind, to assume its native sovereignty, for the carrying on the reformation.

Thus we see God's government in morals becomes as conspicuous as in natural things : For, the disposing causes and effects in such a manner as to make vice defeat its own end, no less manifests the attention of infinite wisdom, than the aiding matter to produce its proper destination, is fitted to display infinite power.

But to perceive the force of what is here said, we must remember, that moral government consists of TWO PARTS ; The one, a Provision to prevent evil, and to support good ; The other, a destination of reward and punishment, assigned in due proportions to the agents of either : Our subject concerns the first part only : The  
second

second is to be explained on other principles ; and is not within the limits of this Discourse.

To conclude, The sober inquirer will not be displeased to find at length, that the objections to God's moral Government spring from the weakness of our faculties, and the prejudices attending our situation ; joined to a corrupt vanity which makes human reason the measure of all things : and that this Philosophy, which bears such a shew of enlarged and superior knowledge, stands on the narrow bottom of ignorance, and as it rises in vanity, increases in absurdity.

TO HUMBLE HUMAN REASON is the work of true Religion, and, if not the end, is always the issue, of sound Philosophy : but to DEBASE HUMAN NATURE is the low aim of impiety, and the darling project of corrupt manners. Providence laid open the knowledge of his works to excite our gratitude, and strengthen our attachment to their Author. What the philosopher said of *the knowledge of ourselves* may be well applied to the knowledge of the universe. " Let us not imagine it was given merely to humble human arrogance : One great purpose of it was to impress upon our hearts a sense of the divine goodness towards man \*." To turn this knowledge, therefore, to a brutal debasement of our nature, or a philosophic oblivion of our Lord and Master, is the lowest depravity of an intelligent Being. In a word, if reason and piety have no weight, let natural shame deter us, when we can never merit this distinction, at least from dishonouring the grace by irreverent cavils at the dispensation.

\* Illud *græcè* *συνετός* noli putare ad arrogantiam minuendam solum esse dictum, verum etiam ut bona nostra norimus. Cic.

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# S E R M O N III.

## THE LOVE OF GOD AND MAN.

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1 Ep. JOHN IV. ver. 20.

IF A MAN SAY, I LOVE GOD, AND HATETH HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR; FOR HE THAT LOVETH NOT HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HATH SEEN, HOW CAN HE LOVE GOD WHOM HE HATH NOT SEEN?

**T**HE superior excellence of the Gospel-morality above all other summaries of human conduct, whether preached up as a RELIGION by Priests; enforced for LAW by the founders of Society; or recommended under the name of PHILOSOPHY by the Masters of wisdom; is now so generally seen and acknowledged, that even the enemies of Revelation have been forced to confess, It is as well in perfection as in purity, as well in public use as in private, truly worthy the original it assumes.

An advantage which the Ministers of our holy Religion have, with great judgment, taken all occasions to enforce, and with equal solidity to explain.

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But there is another circumstance in this divine Oeconomy which carries the honour of it still higher, as directly tending to prove, That the Gospel-morality which is so worthy of God, had, in truth, God for its immediate Author. And this perhaps may not have been insisted on with the frequency and attention which so important a matter seems to require.

The circumstance I mean is, that profound and enlarged knowledge of human nature, which the Apostles discover in their manner of recommending moral duties. In this dispensation, these *weak and foolish instruments*, in the hand of Providence, have foiled and disgraced the boasted wisdom of Greece and Rome: and in that very way wherein their wisdom most excelled; in short and detached precepts, composed for the conduct of human life by men studious to reduce their long laborious searches after happiness into weighty and compendious aphorisms \*.

But before I proceed to explain the words of my text, which afford so illustrious an example of this truth, I shall consider, in general, the occasion of them.

The life, the spirit of Christian Religion is universal benevolence. Agreeably to this, we may observe, That the first founders of the Churches, let the occasion be what it would, whatever Discipline they established, whatever Doctrine they enforced, whatever vice or Heresy they stigmatized, or whatever grace or virtue they recommended, CHARITY was the thing still present with them, and always in their care. Charity, *the bond of perfectness*, the *end of the commandment*; that ethereal principle, which, like the elastic fluid of the Philosophers, animates, connects, and enobles the whole System of intelligent nature.

The beloved Disciple of our Lord particularly, who may be well supposed to *know his Master's will*, seems to have written the Epistle, from whence I take my text, with no other design than to recommend this first of Virtues, CHARITY: at a season too,

\* *Ῥῆματι ἀγαπᾶν ἀποκρισέναι.* Plat. in Protag.

when, as Heresies were springing up apace, some modern Theologists would be apt to think he might have employed his time and talents to more advantage. And indeed one might ask, and scarce absurdly, why so very much upon Charity, in an age when the *followers of the Lamb* had so few inducements to pollute it? For the Faith being yet chaste from the prostitutions of the Schools, and the Hierarchy uncorrupted by the gifts of Constantine, the Church laboured neither under Bigotry nor Ambition, the two fatal incentives of uncharitable Zeal. But the reply is easy. It was the providence of that prophetic spirit which set before them the image of those miserable times, *When iniquity should abound, and the love of many should wax cold*: and they were willing to bear witness, and to record their testimony against the future violaters of *the bond of perfectness*. For I can by no means enter into the refinements of him who discovered that *Jesus* and his followers might preach up love and charity the better to enable a set of Church politicians, some ages after, to tyrannize over those whom the engaging sounds of benevolence and brotherly love had intrapped into obedience\*.

Besides, this is not delivered like a temporary direction: it is not barely recommended: the reason, on which it stands, is given

\* “Terrors alone, though accompanied with miracles and prodigies of whatever kind, are not capable of raising that sincere faith and absolute reliance which is required in favour of the divinely authorized Instructor and spiritual Chief. The affection and love which procures a true adherence to the new religious foundation, must depend either on a real or counterfeit goodness in the religious founder. Whatever ambitious spirit may inspire him; whatever savage zeal or persecuting principle may lie in reserve, ready to disclose itself when authority and power is once obtained; the first scene of doctrine, however, fails not to present us with the agreeable views of *Joy, love, meekness, gentleness, and moderation*.—*Charity and Brotherly love* are very engaging sounds; but who would dream that out of abundant Charity and brotherly love should come steel, fire, gibbets, rods, &c.” *Characteristics*, vol. iii. p. 114, 115, ed. 4th. But the general premises are as false as the particular inference is absurd. Mahomet did raise that *sincere faith and absolute reliance*, amongst his followers, by *terrors* alone, and without that *affection and love* employed by the founder of Christianity.

with

with it; a reason founded in the nature of things, and supported by the very order of Providence. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* An argument, which, for its unaffected simplicity, a modish Freethinker will be tempted to despise; and yet would pretend to admire, had it come from Plato or Cicero.

But some, perhaps, may like the reasoning not the worse for its being evangelical: and such will bear with me while I attempt to illustrate its superior force and beauty.

The argument is founded in the true theory of the RISE and PROGRESS of the SOCIAL AFFECTIONS; of which the following account may afford us some imperfect notion.

An endeavour to preserve its Being makes part of the essential constitution of every created thing. Hence, in the Inanimate, a resistance to outward force; in the Animate, a pursuit or an abhorrence of what is helpful or hurtful; and, in Man, that first and strongest passion of his nature, SELF-LOVE; from whence all the other appetites derive their force, and to which they direct their aim. Its use is to assist the heart to awaken Virtue, and to push out and develop the great principle of BENEVOLENCE.

It is true, indeed, that Benevolence, arising from this source, at first runs thick and turbid; but, as it holds its way, it refines; it purifies and expands its current, till it hath lost all memory of its low original.

For the passion of self-love, aided by the kindred appetite of NATURAL AFFECTION, soon makes an effort to move outward; and looking forward with an instinctive-tenderness on our offspring, it is taught to turn its regard, as far back, with rational-gratitude on our Parents. And though the former be loving ourselves as represented in others; and the latter, only loving others as represented in ourselves; yet the principle of Benevolence being now awakened, it begins, from this moment, to desert its origine: it extends itself to our remoter relatives; and, in a little time, takes in every connection.

nection of domestic life. And, thus continuing to enlarge and widen, by such time as it grows impatient of restraint, the wants and reliefs, the services and protection, which exercise its virtue in this inferior state, enable it to form ideas of a nobler Community, and to trace the out-lines and image of a SOCIETY. This produceth another effort, and of a more exalted kind ; the object of benevolence being no longer an INDIVIDUAL, but a WHOLE.

From this time the social passions make large advances ; and Benevolence, improved and strengthened even by the selfish sense of mutual wants, and the experienced means of mutual relief, extends its influence and efficacy through the whole community of those who need, or can impart, assistance : and thus, on the natural plan of domestic-connections, erects that artificial regimen called Civil-society. So that, as before, Benevolence advanced from particular to general ; it now riseth still higher, from PRIVATE to PUBLIC. And thus, having a Community for its object, it wins and truly deserves its name : Self-love being now absorbed in the noblest of all social-passions, THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY ; which the Roman Patriot, in a philosophic analysis of its generation and constituent parts, rightly defines to be that which “ includes all “ other social affections \*.”

Thus doth SELF-LOVE, under the varying appearance of natural-affection, domestic relation, and the connections of social habitude, at first work blindly on, obscure and deep in dirt ; but, as it makes its way, it continues rising, till it emerges into light ; and then, suddenly expiring, leaves behind it the fairest issue : which, nobly forgetful of its low beginning, advances on the steps of Virtue, till it reaches to RELIGION.

For the interests of mere animal life being well secured in this first progress to Benevolence ; the Mind, which hitherto only cared for the Body, begins to make provision for itself ; and, having laid

\* *Chari sunt Parentes, chari Liberi, Propinqui, Familiares: sed omnes omnium Charitales PATRIA una complexa est. Cic.*

in for the other's wants and weakness, attends, in good time, to its own superior dignity and importance.

And now, placed on so fair an eminence, as the LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY, and its sight purged and defecated from the gross remains of evanescent Self-love, it goes on widening its views, till it hath taken in the whole race of Mankind; considered but as one Policy, or rather, FAMILY; connected by the equal participation of one common nature; and supported by the consequent right of one common measure; and therefore the endeared object of one general benevolence.

Thus DOMESTIC life, which first produced Civil-society, and then gave birth to this more generous and enlarged community, at length brings Benevolence round again into itself, as to its full and final completion, by drawing the whole race of mankind into one common FAMILY.

But, in the course of this progress, the Mind, as it widens, becoming fatigued and dazzled by its intense solicitation of this growing Whole, hath frequent need, at its several stages, to catch at and to rest in partial objects.

Hence the origine of FRIENDSHIP \*, the solace and splendor of private life; which while we are advancing towards that only

\* "*Private Friendship, and Zeal for the Public and our Country, are virtues purely voluntary in a Christian. They are no essential parts of his CHARITY. He is not so tied to the affairs of this life; nor is he obliged to enter into such engagements with this lower world, as are of no help to him in acquiring a better.*" *Characteristics*, 4th ed. vol. i. p. 98, 99. The Philosophy of this remark is like the candor. For if (as we shall now see) no one can acquire the love of God without having love or benevolence to man; so neither can this benevolence (which certainly is not a *virtue purely voluntary in a Christian*) be acquired, without having had *private Friendship and zeal for the Public and our Country*. The reason is the same in both cases: the road to the more general stages of benevolence lying, all the way, through the more particular. *Engagements, therefore, with this lower world, (to use the language of the noble Writer) are (contrary to his conclusion) of great help to us in acquiring a better.*—But when Christian Charity had been represented as not springing from Virtue, it was no such bold abuse of the public indulgence to endeavour to persuade us, that the Christian Faith is not founded in Argument.

adequate

adequate object of human attachment, a Whole teacheth us by the way all our journalary duties to Particulars.

Having thus endeavoured to explain how all the virtues of humanity arise, and have their source, from the gradual expansion of the great principle of Benevolence : we come, in the next place, to consider, how, in its further advances to perfection, RELIGION itself emergeth from it.

In all the objects of love and benevolence, the attractive quality is good. And this connexion being made by the nature and constitution of things, the greater the apparent good, the stronger must the passion grow. Now when the whole human race is considered by us as the object of our love ; The steps by which we are led to this high advance in benevolence, such as Man's origine, his common nature, and the dependence of the happiness of the individual on the species, carry us naturally higher ; to seek the first cause of so orderly and well-regulated an effect. An inquiry, which terminates in the Author of this, and of all other good : Whom, as such, we are forcibly drawn to pursue, and to aspire after ; and in the contemplation of whose nature and attributes we find at last the SUPREME AND SOVEREIGN GOOD : from whence, as we say, all other good ariseth, and in which they are all contained. HE, therefore, challengeth our supreme and sovereign love ; which never ceaseth to advance and enlarge itself, till it end in an UNION with him.

And thus the last great effort of benevolence produceth what we call, RELIGION ; whose end all agree to be HAPPINESS.

This is the true account of the rise and progress of UNIVERSAL LOVE : which, as it regards man, our holy faith calls CHARITY ; as it regards God, PIETY.

But there were in the apostolic times, and will be in all times, a sort of men who are for catching at the rewards of faith without undergoing this long, but pleasing *labour of love* ; and whose frantic aim is to make a sacrilegious divorce between Charity and Piety. These men assume to themselves great merit in loving God, while they

they treat their Brother with contempt and cruelty. But what says the Apostle, in my text? Provoked at their hypocrisy, he strips off the mask, and brands them with the odious name of LIARS: a name, in Scripture language, of the most opprobrious import; as given to Impostors of all kinds; and implying in it every thing corrupt both in moral and religious practice. *If a man (says St John) say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* The force and beauty of which reasoning the foregoing account, of the rise and progress of Benevolence, will enable us to understand.

“ You pretend, says the Apostle, to *love God*, though you *bate your Brother*. Vain and fallacious! The love of every object begins, like all our other passions, from self-love: Thus we love ourselves, by representation, in our Parents, and in our Offspring: it extends to our remoter relatives; and so on, through the whole vicinity, to every fellow-member of the Community. And now, self-love refined by reason, and sublimed by virtue, begins to lose its nature, and deservedly to take another name. Our Country next claims our love: we then extend it to all Mankind; and never rest till we have, at length, fixed it on the most amiable of all objects, the great Author and Original of Being.

This is the course and progress of HUMAN LOVE; gradually rising from the individual to the whole: as unlike, in its progress as in its purity, to the DIVINE BENEVOLENCE; which, in gracious aid of its Creatures, takes a different course: for, springing from the Whole, it spreads and expands itself through every moral system, till it clasps and embraces the Individual.

And now (pursues the Apostle) I reason thus, Can you, mistaken man! who are not yet arrived at that inferior stage of benevolence, the love of your Brother, *whom you have seen*, that is, whom the sense of mutual wants, and the experience of mutual relief, amongst the joint partakers of one common nature, might teach you to love, can you pretend to have attained the top and summit of this

virtue, the love of God, whom *you have not seen*, that is, whose wonderful oeconomy, in the system of creation and government, which makes him so amiable, you appear to have no conception of; You, who have not yet learnt, that your own low system is supported on the great principle of benevolence. Fear him, flatter him, fight for him, as you blindly dread his power, you may: But, to love him, as you know not his nature, is impossible."

This is St. John's simple reasoning. From whence I conclude for the divinity of that Spirit which could infuse so much sublime knowledge into the pen of a rude unlettered fisherman.

Nor does it less recommend the excellence of our holy Religion than the wisdom of this its Minister: for what could give us a higher idea of Christianity than its making the love of man the previous step, the only way of acquiring, that happy frame of mind, divinely tempered with the love of God; which fits us for what is the end and completion of all religion, the possession of his Spirit?

But this doctrine, which explains the connection between *the love of God and man*, has still a further use. It keeps our holy Faith pure from SUPERSTITION, BIGOTRY, and FANATICISM: the three worst dishonours to which Religion is exposed.

1. For DIVINE LOVE thus produced, and rising on the knowledge of God's nature, will keep religious worship free of SUPERSTITION, will preserve it from all barbarous and abject ceremonies; and from all selfish and uncharitable devotion. It will remove from God's service all slavish dread of his anger for the neglect of actions indifferent; and all childish hope of atoning for violated morality by the performance of others, equally indifferent.

2. THIS LOVE, standing on the foundation of human benevolence, whose object is God's rational creation, will exclude all the BIGOTRY of false Zeal, which, for God's sake, is ever ready to desolate the earth. For now, no one can be so absurd to imagine,  
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that the means of perfecting the fruit of faith, which is the love of God, is by shaking the root of charity, benevolence to man. I am aware, how certain propagators of the Faith, sometimes the despicable tools of others' impotency; but as often the viler slaves of their own ambition, have endeavoured to hide their corrupt passions under the thin covering of a School-distinction. While they would persuade us, that it is pure charity to man which thus factiously engages them in, what they call THE CAUSE OF GOD: and that what plain honest men style a want of Charity, when they insult the fame, the fortune, or the person of their Brother, is the very height of this princely virtue, a Charity for his soul—So, indeed, it may be of the Hangman's Charity, who waits for your Clothes. But St. John's, or St. Paul's, it could not be. It could not be that *Charity* which was *not easily provoked, which thought no evil; bore all things, hoped all things, believed all things*. A Charity, which begins in candor, inspires good opinion, and rests in the temporal welfare of our Brother.

3. But the *deceitfulness of the heart* is ingenious in expedients to elude the commandments of God. And when Bigotry, by its coarse and butcherly violations of Charity, hath sufficiently discredited its own measures, FANATICISM, with equal rage, though with somewhat a milder aspect, steps in to divest us of our humanity, under pretence, to assimilate it to the divine nature, by annihilating all love of the Creature, and resolving every other affection into the pure unmixed love of God; as if the least portion of benevolence, communicated to our Brother, was a robbery to our Maker. The fumes of spiritual madness ditate these men from seeing so far into the order of things as to understand, that till we can throw off the condition of related Beings, as well as the passion of humanity which results from it, our fellow-creatures will always have a claim to our benevolence. In compassion therefore to such, Holy Scripture has provided a still easier instruction than this negative precept of my text, by the addition

of the positive command, THAT HE WHO LOVETH GOD, LOVE HIS BROTHER ALSO \*.

Such then is the Religion which Jesus came into the world to teach. Whose foundation being laid in the *love of our Brother*, provides for our peace and consolation here; and whose superstructure terminating in the *love of God*, secures and establishes our happiness hereafter.

\* 1 John iv. 21.

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S E R M O N IV.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND MAN.

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PROVERBS xvii. ver. 5.

WHOSO MOCKETH THE POOR REPROACHETH HIS MAKER.

**O**F all the truths, for the direction of our conduct, with which this royal treasury of ancient wisdom abounds, there is none fuller either of profitable use or profound science than this contained in my text ; which so severely censures all expressions of contempt towards those whom Providence has thrown below us on the distressful stage of human life.

And, as we must first clear our corrupt nature from this rankness, before we can attempt to cultivate that immortal amaranth of paradise, Christian love and benevolence ; it may not be improper to shew the reason and explain the use of the WISE MAN's divine aphorism, *Whoso mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker*. As much as to say, " He who maketh the Poor the object of his contempt and ridicule, on account of those disastrous circumstances which.

which attend the want of the goods of fortune, tacitly condemns and reproaches the wise and gracious order of Providence."

But it may not be amiss, previously to consider, In what state it is, that man becomes the object of this criminal *mockery* to his fellow-creature. It is plain, it cannot be in that where he lives uncivilized. For there, the distinctions between RICH and POOR, whereon the insolence of wealth formeth those odious comparisons, which conclude in the contempt of penury, have hardly any place; that sordid condition, which, now contrasted to pomp and grandeur, is become the subject of opulent scorn, being there so general as to admit no room for an unfavourable distinction: But, an universal parity, like darkness, blots out all difference between honourable and mean. Nay, should the civilized beholder be disposed to regard with contempt the wants and miseries of this state, it would not be the criminal contempt forbidden in my text: because the state of nature is not that in which Providence intended we should remain; as appears by the large assistance imparted to us, to free ourselves from the distresses of it. So that if, by a shameful indolence, man should neglect to improve those advantages, the sordid circumstances, inseparable from an uncivilized condition, would have no claim to be exempted from scorn and *mockery*: and, consequently, however CHARITY might suffer, PROVIDENCE was not insulted.

It is only in SOCIETY, therefore, that the Poor become subject to this outrage. And, in this state only, the outrage becomes IMPIETY. For Civil regimen, by inventing and improving the accommodations of life, and by securing, to the owner, what is so invented and improved, changeth the natural equality of conditions amongst men; and introduceth that invidious distinction of Poor and RICH; made far more bitter from the insolence of Wealth, than the envious longings of Poverty. For it is the vicious caprice of Riches to be impatient under a rivalry in the advantages of fortune, and yet, at the same time, insensible to the distresses, and  
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contemptuous to the condition of those who have never striven with them for any of those advantages.

So that there is no circumstance in the distresses of want, but what insulting wealth can make the subject of its *mock-ry*. To some, their narrow Minds, their gross conceptions, their unimproved talents, are fruitful sources of contempt and merriment. Others, who cannot rise so high in their discoveries, can yet find matter of mirth in their impropriety of phrase, their unpolished manners, their ill air, and unformed figure. Nay to such excess of corruption have unblest Riches brought their possessors, that some can make that very SORDIDNESS itself, that miserable cloathing of poverty, a subject for their scorn and ridicule. So that whether it be for want of those advantages of mind and person which their poverty disabled them from procuring, or whether it be for that very poverty itself, they are sure never to escape the inhumanity of unfeeling wealth.

Bow how highly criminal these insults are, my text now leads me to consider.

As Society is the only means of procuring the accommodations, and preserving the dignity, of our animal and reasonable nature ; and as this nature is endowed with appetites and qualities which make it seek, and fit it for SOCIETY ; we must needs conclude, Society to be, what Scripture informs us it is, THE ORDINANCE OF GOD. Now it is essential to this Society, that the goods of fortune be unequally distributed ; To the end, that some be goaded on by want to seek their relief in new inventions and improvements, which, tending to the better commodity of life, are objective to the public good ; and that others be enabled by abundance, and disposed by the love of ease and pleasure, to promote and encourage those endeavours. For were the goods of fortune to be equally divided, such a distribution would soon return us to the state of unimproved nature, by taking off those spurs to industry, the rewards attending the improvements of *social* life.

Again,

Again, as an unequal distribution was required to answer the ends of civil community, so the various tempers, talents, and appetites of men were admirably fitted to introduce, and framed to perpetuate this inequality.

Hence, we conclude, That these different stations in Society were marked out and disposed by the peculiar ordinance of Providence: For he, who decrees the end, must needs be supposed to direct the means conducive to it.

But admitting this to be the case, it must needs follow, that he who makes any of these conditions of life the subject of his scorn and *mockery*, *reproaches* the justice and goodness of the Director of the system. For that man can never be said to be treated with a common degree of goodness, who is thrust into such a station as makes him the object of reasonable contempt to his fellow-creature; a creature of the same species, and who has no imaginable pretensions to better treatment from the justice of their common master.

We must needs, therefore, subscribe to the doctrine of the text, That no greater insult can be offered to the wisdom, the justice, or the goodness of God, than by looking down with despite and *mockery* on the poverty of our distressed brethren.

Yet vile as this *mockery* is, the frequent practice hath made it so unheeded, that we see it committed daily without suffering ourselves to be affected with that aversion and abhorrence, so justly due unto it. Hence the serious admonition of the *wise man*; who, the better to assist our humanity in the free exercise of its natural feelings, awakens religion, by branding the vice as an IMPIETY: in every deliberate act of which is comprised all that is most criminal in our degenerate and corrupt nature.

This species of impiety in particular, contains the basest INGRATITUDE towards God, and INHUMANITY to our Brother: Which, including the violation of all our relations as reasonable creatures, sinks us below the very beasts themselves.

And can there be a worse ingratitude towards the great Disposer of all things, than for man to make any station in Society the  
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object of his contempt? Society, which God himself *ordained* for the advancement of human happiness! and which can be only procured by means of those various degrees and subordinations, productive of that condition, which we impiously make the matter of our scorn. Is this a fitting return for the care and kindness of that Master, who drew us from a state of savages, who led us to a life of civility, and hath put it in our power to improve the blessings of Providence, and the endowments of reason, most suitably to the dignity of our nature!

We may reflect, likewise, that we, who thus offend, do by the peculiar indulgence of Heaven, reap all the benefit of Society; while those we injure are so circumstanced as to bear all the inclemencies and hardships of it; a burthen, which weighs the heavier on them, as it is borne alone. And yet if we look into ourselves and them, and compare what we find on either part, we shall discover nothing which could dispose the *righteous Judge of all the earth* to decree a state of ease and affluence for us, and condemn them to indigence and labour. Nay, were we not blinded by self-love, we should soon find, in this despised quarter, men whose understandings and honesty, whose piety and diligence, whose care and affection for their families, whose conscientious submission and obedience to authority, might well enable them to dispute, and qualify them to carry the station of honour, from their Betters.

But how detestable must this ingratitude appear, when we reflect further, That these low stations, the object of our scorn, were ordained for no other civil purpose than to support us in that distinction of abundance, from the wanton abuse of which arises all this guilt of contempt which so justly subjects the offender to God's righteous judgment. So that we carry our impiety to such a height, when we *mock the poor*, that we even *reproach our Maker* with the very blessings which, at their expence, he heaps upon ourselves.

And this leads me to the second point, the INHUMANITY to our Brethren. Indeed the very considerations, which upbraid our ingratitude to our *Maker*, expose our inhumanity to the *Poor*. For

can any thing be more inhumane than, when the stations of Society are thus necessarily unequal, and when Providence has thrown our lot amongst the few who reap in ease the accommodations of it, at the expence of multitudes, who had as good a claim to that distinction ; Can any thing, I say, be more inhumane than to treat their less happy condition with outrage and contempt ? A condition, from which no superiority of nature, no advantage of intellectual, or merit of moral endowments, nothing but the established order of things, hath exempted us, or subjected them.

If to this, we add (as hath been just observed), that their low condition was established to support us in the proud distinction of abundance, it must greatly inflame our guilt, and increase our confusion. For to the Poor it is, that we are immediately, and almost solely, indebted for every advantage of ease and pleasure, which improved and refined society affords (advantages which we are but too apt to esteem the principal blessings of society) ; it being by their incessant toil that the elegances of polite and fashionable life are procured for us. While all the reward They have, for becoming benefactors to the Great and Wealthy, is but the hard and scanty sustenance of a miserable Being. A Being only less miserable than That, which the insolent Rich-man himself must have been content to drag, in a life unassisted by the sweat and ingenuity of the Labourer and Artificer. For were it not for the incessant drudgery of the Poor, we should soon be brought back again, even amidst our largest accumulations of fortune, to a condition of distress which would soon wipe out all that odious circumstance of insolent comparison, from whence arises this mean, this vile, this unmanly contempt for the lower stations of our fellow-citizens.

But what is alone sufficient to strike us with horror at so wretched an inhumanity, is the consideration of those numerous disorders of body, those Maladies, to which a restless application of all their faculties for the supply of our imaginary, and therefore endless wants, perpetually subjects the industrious Poor. How, by toiling in pursuit of commodities, they themselves are never to enjoy, Some  
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are confined to the pestilential damps of mines; and Others exposed to the rage of elementary, and solar fires: These doomed to struggle with the various inclemencies of distempered air: and Those, to undergo the rotten vapours of fenny waters, or the corrosive humidity of the ocean: Here a too sedentary occupation viciates the torpid fluids: and there, a too violent destroys the overstretched tone of the solids: The baleful materials employed, or worked upon, often strike the artist with acute distempers; and the manner or method of working as often draws on chronical: so that the shop of the artificer may be truly called the warehouse of Death. The maladies, which swarm so thick and constant in it, have even afforded matter for the charitable Physician to compose distinct works of the *Diseases of Artificers*\*: Where we find the distempers of each Labourer to be as numerous as the Tools he works with; and as peculiar as the materials he employs.

Such then is the nature of the crime so severely condemned in my text; and such the circumstances which so deeply aggravate it. The serious consideration of these things will be abundantly sufficient to confound the pride of Opulence, and shame the Rich man into those duties to God and his Brother, which his STATION more indispensably requires; that very circumstance which, to the dishonour of human nature, he hath suffered to mislead him into so scandalous a violation of both.

This salutary humiliation will lead him easily back into the road of Piety and Charity. He will grow warm with gratitude to his *Maker*, and soften with compassion for his brother. But gratitude and compassion, which stop at acknowledgments and commiseration, are as great an insult on God and Man, as that more open *mockery* condemned in my text.

The only acceptable way, of testifying our repentance, in an impious age so forward to cavil at the ordinance of Providence, is to discharge those duties which have a natural tendency to vindicate its ways. God hath given us every encouragement, to perform them.

\* Bernardini Ramazini De morbis Artificum.

He hath put it in the power even of miserable man, and how great is that honour ! to justify the œconomy of his system : For the faithful discharge of what our various relations to our Fellow-creatures require of us, will repair all those deformities of defect and excess, which nature or fortune is for ever casting over the fair face of Creation. For what is it (in the opinion of impious men) that so greatly discredits the dispensations of Providence, but that state of misery to which the bulk of mankind is condemned, in order to support the Few in the full tide of wantonness and riot ? Would the Rich once begin to think themselves the dispensators of Providence for the Poor, Impiety would soon be forced to confess, that the goods of fortune, though unequally divided, were yet wisely and graciously administered : All men would see, that the pouring down wealth on high stations was only a sacred deposit to supply the wants and distresses of the low : Wants very wisely imposed, as a necessary means of producing those accommodations which Man's improved nature indispensably requires.

This, and this only, can atone for the enormity condemned in my text. This will support the Order, and is consequently the best vindication of the Oeconomy, of Providence ; which wants nothing to render it as respectable to the world, as it is illustrious in itself, but this reasonable compliance to the common dictates of Humanity and Religion.

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# S E R M O N V.

## THE CHARACTER AND OFFICE OF THE MESSIAH.

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1 C O R. I. 30.

JESUS CHRIST WHO, OF GOD, IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM AND  
RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND SANCTIFICATION AND REDEMPTION.

**I**N these memorable words, the Apostle, Paul, hath given us a full and exact Character of the Personage of the holy JESUS, and of the nature of that Religion he was sent to propagate amongst Men.

*Wisdom* and *Righteousness* describe a MESSENGER sent from God with the publication of the eternal Law of Truth and Right: and *Sanctification* and *Redemption* denote the MESSIAH foretold, who was to atone for man's transgressions, and to restore him to his lost Inheritance.

These two important matters, the first of which respects the WORKER; and the second, his WORK; I propose to make the subject of the following Discourse.

I. The

## I.

The Jews, at the time of Christ's advent, were in full expectation of their long promised Messiah. So that St. John tells us, the multitude on their being miraculously fed by Jesus, cried out, *this is of a truth that PROPHET that should come into the world* \*. And indeed, this judgment was such a one as the People are generally wont to pass; crude, undigested, and made up of a mixture of truth and falsehood. It was true, and they argued rightly, that the worker of this miracle was a PROPHET SENT from God. But it was false, and they were too hasty in concluding, that This was the proper proof of his being the PROPHET FORETOLD in their sacred volumes. For though one of the marks of this Prophet (as it must be one of every messenger sent immediately from God), was the working Miracles; yet there were many other circumstances, respecting both his time and person, which were to unite in that Character, before he could be said, *to be, of a truth, that Prophet that should come into the world.*

This, therefore, on the whole, must pass for a popular prejudice in favour of the Son of God; but yet a Prejudice: Less unreasonable, indeed, than many, they presumed to entertain against him: As when they thought an idle Proverb sufficient to controvert the strongest evidence of his Messiah-character. *Can any thing good come out of Nazareth*, saith Nathanael, *an Israelite in whom there was no guile* †, but, as appears from hence, a great deal of foolish prejudice.

The two great Prophets of God, placed by him at the head of each of his Dispensations, were MOSES and JESUS. In this they differed, that Moses bore the simple Character of a DIVINE MESSENGER; Jesus, the more complex one of a DIVINE MESSENGER FORETOLD. For, though the deliverance of the seed of Abraham was predicted in the sacred records along with the deliverance of the

\* Chap. vi. 14.

† John i. 46, 47.

seed of Adam ; yet as the first was only a type and prelude of the other ; it was not Moses the deliverer of the Jews, but Jesus the deliverer of mankind, the finisher of God's great work of REDEMPTION, who had the distinguished honour of being foretold ; as well by intimation in a mysterious ritual, as by a more open declaration in the oracles of the Law and the Prophets.

However, the preliminary ground of credence was the same, in both ; namely, that the doctrines they taught were worthy of God. This worth consists in their TRUTH, and in their IMPORTANCE.

1. No falsehood can issue from the fountain of Truth. Whatever therefore pretends to come from God, which contradicts our common notions of his Being and attributes, must of necessity be condemned for an imposture, notwithstanding any appearance of extraordinary power in the propagator of such doctrines. And should an Imposture happen to be attended with these circumstances of power, it could not be fairly deemed an imputation on God's goodness, since the holy spirit hath foretold, that deceivers should come with *lying miracles*, almost of force to draw aside *the very elect themselves* ; and since, against the illusions of these deceivers, God hath given us so sure a test and criterion as are the common notions concerning his Being and Attributes.

2. Nor is it, in the second place, a sufficient ground of credence, that what is thus taught be simply true. It must be truth of importance. Such as in its immediate tendency respects the *good of man*, and in its ultimate, the *glory of God*. These are the necessary qualities of such doctrines as we esteem WORTHY the extraordinary patronage of Heaven.

This then, may be called the preliminary ground of Credence, but not the CREDENTIAL itself. An important Truth is indeed worthy of God. But neither the Truth, nor the importance of it, shews that it had God for its immediate Author. Because it is impossible to measure the bounds of human capacity, or to ascertain what progress an improved understanding may make in the discovery

covery of divine and moral truths. We have been told indeed, but by men of no great authority, "That the proper credentials of a divine mission are the truth and importance of the doctrine proposed." But in this, they are neither ingenuous nor serious. They hold no extraordinary Revelation at all. So that this is only one of their **DISGUISED SENTENCES**: which, like most others from the same quarter, is conveyed under an equivocal expression, confounding common speech, and making **TRUTH** and **DIVINE TRUTH** the same thing.

The proper Credential, therefore, of a Messenger from God is the **POWER OF WORKING MIRACLES**. A sort of evidence fitted to the capacity of all men. For the difference between true and false miracles, that is, between what we should admit and what we should reject, does not consist in the first's being the finger of God; and the other, the operation of a finite Being: for then, man, who knows so little of the material and intellectual world, would have no criterion to distinguish between the true and false: But the difference consists in this, That true miracles are such as are worked in confirmation of doctrines worthy of God; and false, such as aim to support doctrines unworthy of him. Our security for the first conclusion is the goodness and justice of God, which will never suffer us (I do not mean the *good* in distinction to the *bad*, which is a low and foreign consideration, but mankind in general), to be brought into a situation where no human means can be found to prevent our falling into error. Our security for the second, is the certainty that immoral doctrines could never come from God; and the uncertainty what power other agents may have to produce appearances contrary to the common course of nature.

This seems to be the true notion of a **MIRACLE**, as it subjects all which pretend to that character, to the decision of human judgment; every man being able to distinguish between what is done in confirmation of doctrines worthy of God, and what is done to support doctrines unworthy of him. As on the other hand, that which defines a Miracle to be the immediate work of God, must needs be

be a false notion of it, because it would render the Credential of Miracles an insufficient security, by reducing us to an inability of distinguishing between the true and the false.

On the whole, then, we conclude, that MIRACLES are the full Credential of a SIMPLE MESSENGER from God ; such as we suppose MOSES to be.

But, now, something more is necessary to establish the complicated Character of a MESSENGER FORETOLD, such a one as JESUS challenged to himself.

It is not enough for such a Character that he works the most amazing Miracles ; unless, at the same time, he be found to have those various marks upon him which belong to the Messenger foretold. For having assumed both parts of the prophetic Character, and united them in his own person, he is no longer at liberty to disjoin and prove them singly : so as that, when by miracles he hath established the Character of a *divine* Messenger, this will remain unshaken, though he should fail in proving himself, by other evidence, the Messenger *foretold*. For not only all falshood is incongruous to a divine mission, but is dissociable with all truth. Whatever supernatural evidence, therefore, is produced by such a personage, comes in equally in attestation of both parts of his Character ; and if it fail in one, cannot be made to support the other.

Now Miracles can be no proof of his being the Messenger foretold, when his person, actions, and fortunes agree not, in all circumstances, with the prophetic descriptions of that Messenger. For Miracles cannot change times and places ; or make that to be, which is not, and that not to be, which is.

From hence, therefore, we draw this second conclusion, “ that Miracles were not the full, or only, Credentials of Jesus, who was a Messenger foretold.” There needed another kind of evidence to establish his pretensions : and that was, that he exactly answered to the description of the predicted MESSIAH, or, in other words,

that he accomplished the Prophecies concerning him. And this we say he did in the amplest manner.

But now it may be asked, "Were his Miracles of no use to establish his Messiah-Character?"

The answer will lead us to the second part of what we are to speak to: The nature of those ancient prophecies which foretell the promised Messiah of the Jews.

We have observed that the office of this Messiah was to compleat and perfect God's great work of REDEMPTION; to which, all his various dispensations to mankind were directed. As therefore Jesus was the finisher of the whole Oeconomy, it is natural to suppose that neither the worker nor his work would be forgotten under any of those dispensations. This is indeed the fact: He is remembered under all of them, though in a manner conformable to the specific nature of each. Thus, when he is revealed to Adam, the representative of human kind, he is spoken of as the destroyer of their spiritual enemy who should *bruise the head of the Serpent*\*: when promised to the Patriarchal family, he is represented as the glory and blessing of their Race, the *Shiloh, to whom should be the gathering of the people*†. And when to the Mosaic Republic; as a *Prophet and Lawgiver like to its first founder*‡. So that in all these graphical descriptions, though the drawing was the same, yet as the colouring was different, this would be one source of obscurity.

Again, as each dispensation was preparatory to what succeeded, the relation between the type and antitype occasioned the prophecies concerning the succeeding dispensation to be intermixed with others respecting the fortunes of the present. Thus, for instance, the spiritual victories of the Messiah are intermixed with the temporal deliverances atchieved under the Jewish Leaders. And this is another source of obscurity.

\* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. xlix. 10.

‡ Dent. xviii. 15.

Lastly,

Lastly, the Christian Dispensation is in its nature entirely opposite to the Jewish ; and yet the prophetic account of it is conveyed under ideas altogether appropriate to the LAW. But this, by the wisest designation of Providence. One important part of Jesus' his office was to break down the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles, to extend the privilege of being the select people of God to all the race of Adam, to free his countrymen from the bondage of the ceremonial Law, to teach all men the worship of God *in spirit and in truth* ; in a word, to change temporal blessings into eternal. But, at the time of making those predictions, the Mosaic system had not run out half its course : and so was not to be exposed to popular contempt by an information that it was only the harsh rudiment of one more easy and perfect. Now an exact and plain description of the Messiah's office, which would have told the people this secret, must needs have indisposed them to the reverence due to their LAW. A mysterious repose, therefore, was to be cast over these *living Oracles*, which should present no more to the dull conceptions of the People, than a large increase of blessings, to be procured in the *age to come*, by some mighty Deliverer. And the expedients employed for this purpose bear the clearest marks of the divinity of their Author.

The first was in the **EXPRESSION** ; by representing those spiritual blessings figuratively, under the carnal terms of the Law. Civil peace, national triumphs, and worldly plenty, to denote religious rectitude, victory over sin and death, and large effusion of the Holy Spirit.

The second expedient was in the **SENSE**. For it being necessary to the carrying on the general scheme of Providence, of which the Mosaic institution made so considerable a part, that the various fortunes and illustrious deliverers under this dispensation should, from time to time, be foretold for the consolation of those to whom the prophecy was delivered ; and for the trust and confidence of posterity which should see it fulfilled ; for this end, I say, the Holy Spirit made use of these intermediate events for types

and symbols of the sufferings and victories of the Messiah, the final object of Prophecy. This all-wise contrivance of Providence produced what Divines call the **SECONDARY SENSE OF PROPHECY** \*. And of this species is the body of those predictions which relate to the Messiah.

These two expedients therefore are another source of mysterious obscurity.

What now are the inferences which must be drawn from the **NATURE OF ANCIENT PROPHECY**, as here explained? They are these.

1. That the only reasonable way of establishing the evidence rising from it, is to set the various predictions together, to compare them with one another, and to illustrate what is obscure in *this* Prophecy with what is clear in *that*; to reconcile the seeming discordancy in particular parts by the order, union, and harmony which results from the general œconomy of the whole.

2. The second inference is, that even after all the advantages gained by the use of this method, there will still remain many obscurities in particular prophecies, which human wit alone will never be able to remove or clear up.

But, in contradiction to the first inference, we have been lately told, "That Prophecies are to be considered and enforced like Miracles, singly and independently, as so many distinct arguments: and that to consider them in a chain, and as having a mutual connection with one another, is a fanciful and romantic system, which deserts the foundation laid by the Evangelists for their explanation †."

\* See Div. Leg. Book vi. sect. 6.

† —"The Evangelists applied them [the Prophecies] singly and independently on each other, to this or that occasion, as so many different arguments for the general truth of the Gospel.—He [the Bp. of L.] seems to have rejected the whole evidence of Prophecy as it was understood and applied by the Apostles and Evangelists; and to have substituted, in its place, a romantic system or fanciful chain of antediluvian Predictions."—Dr. Middleton's Examination of the Bp. of London's Discourse concerning the use and intent of Prophecy, p. 5, 8.

But

But the Objector seems not sufficiently to have considered the very different natures of these two extraordinary interpositions of Providence, in support of its dispensations, **MIRACLES** and **PROPHECIES**.

Single Miracles refer to no Whole or System. Each is independent of another, and hath its own entire evidence in itself. If we consider a miracle, as in the object of the performer, it is simply the credential to a divine mission: if we consider it as directed to its subject, it is a display of the wisdom, the justice, or the goodness of that Being by whose power it is performed. And in either case, it carries its evidence along with it, and receives no aid or addition from without. Indeed, it would be absurd to seek it in any other place. For, put the miracles as near together as you will, and embody them as closely as you can, the stronger will give no support to the weaker. When Jesus rebuked\* the winds and the waves, and a calm ensued; If any one should pretend, that the quiet naturally followed the emotion, and was not the immediate effect of divine power, the urging his walk upon the Sea † would not remove the objection. So again, when Peter ‡ raised Dorcas from the dead, Should an unbeliever say, she was only in a swoon, the urging the restoration of Lazarus, after he had been dead four days §, would hardly silence the cavil. The reason is plain, and the same in both cases. The similar Miracles had no dependance on one another.

The Prophecies on the contrary, though, like the Miracles, they may be considered singly and apart; and the peculiar object of many of them be clearly fixed from their own evidence; yet the truth of the greater part, and the fullest conviction in all, arise from their being seen in one view, and considered as a dependent, connected, and entire Whole; because the general object of all is one compleat Dispensation, consisting of various and subordinate parts,

\* Matth. viii. 26.

† Acts ix. 41.

‡ Matth. xiv. 26.

§ John xi. 39.

which

which reflect mutual light and add mutual lustre to one another. Hence the clearer Prophecies must always communicate of their evidence to the more obscure. Thus if any one should doubt over what part of God's moral dispensation the Messiah should reign, whether the Jewish or Evangelic, when he is prophesied of in the words—*Yet have I set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion* \* ; he may be fully satisfied by the Prophecy of Jeremiah : *Behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, not according to the covenant that I made with their Fathers, &c.—But—I will put my LAW INTO THEIR INWARD PARTS, and write it in their Hearts* †.

And the reason of this difference is evident ; The subject of prophecies is ONE ; and the subject of miracles are MANY.

In opposition therefore to so plain a truth, it would be idle to tell us, “ That Jesus and his Disciples employed the Prophecies singly and independently on each other, to this or that occasion, as so many different arguments for the general truth of the Gospel.” We own they may be thus employed : and when they are so, they are considered under the nature of Miracles, and urged, as the objector well expresses it, *for the general truth of the Gospel*. But what then ? If, because there are some prophecies plain and clear enough to stand alone, on the principles of those to whom they were addressed, and therefore the Evangelists have put them into that position ; must the dark and obscure ones, which require the aid of others to support them, be treated in the same manner ? Are we not rather to conclude that their different circumstances require a different management ? This is so far from deserting the foundation of the Evangelists ‡, that it is prosecuting divine knowledge upon the same principles. These very Evangelists employ single maxims of morality, independent on each other. But is this any

\* Psalm. ii. 6.

† Chap. xxxi. 31.

‡ “ It is certain there was no occasion to desert that foundation which the Evangelists had laid, and to take refuge in a precarious system.” Exam. of the Bp. of Lond. p. 24.

proof that there is no system of morals : Or that our urging those truths systematically, and under all their dependencies, which the Evangelists proposed singly and without connection, is a *deserting the foundations of the Gospel ?*

Would you have the whole truth ? it is this ? The fittest way of conveying instruction to the People, whether prophetic or moral, was to urge their verities singly and independently. For long deductions and chains of reasoning were unsuitable to the capacities of those with whom Jesus and his disciples were concerned. But *systematical and political Divines* (as they are here called) were engaged with Philosophers and Free-thinkers. And the fittest way of urging Prophecies and moral truths to such, was to propose them systematically and in a chain. For it had been pretended that certain Scripture-prophecies have no support from fact ; and that certain Gospel-precepts have no foundation in reason.

2. We come now to the second consequence resulting from the nature of Prophecy. And this is, that there will be still many difficulties in particular Prophecies, which mere human wit, with all the assistance of science, will never be able to remove.

And here comes in the answer which we promised to give to the question “ concerning the use of Miracles to establish the Messiah-Character ? ”

And this we shall venture to make in the affirmative ; and to declare, that they are of great use.

It hath been already observed, that no miracles are sufficient to prove those Prophecies to relate to Jesus, which, on the logical rules of interpretation, can be plainly shewn to relate only to another : because Miracles cannot make that to be true, which is false.

But the conclusion is very different in matters which human wisdom must leave for ever in doubt ; and which, on account of the obscure delivery of the Prophecy, Reason finds itself unable to resolve. In this case, the word of an infallible Interpreter (and such we must esteem him who is endowed with the power that Jesus exercised)

exercised) hath all the authority requisite to decide in doubtful questions. Human wisdom cannot resolve which of two things was in the Speaker's meaning: but the wisdom residing in that Agent, to whom God hath imparted the knowledge of all divine mysteries, can resolve it; and the Miracles of Jesus shew that this knowledge was communicated to him.

And AUTHORITY hath here the force of the most convincing evidence. Common reason, in the affairs of civil life, hath always directed men to the like solution. In all their doubts they have recourse to superior wisdom. On this, they regulate their conduct, and rest satisfied in the security of its decision. The Authority in question, to fix the sense of doubtful Prophecies, differs only in this, that the evidence of the resolved truth is unspeakably greater, as divine wisdom exceeds human.

And we have the same security (infinite Goodness), that we shall be kept from error, when Miracles are employed to fix the sense of doubtful Prophecies, as when more generally applied to support the character of a divine Messenger. Miracles being a species of evidence which reason directs us to confide in, as well in one case as in the other.

With regard therefore to Prophecies thus circumstanced, we say, that the authority of a worker of miracles may be fitly applied to shew, that *he is of a truth that* PROPHET *that should come into the world.*

So that we see, licentious writers, from Porphyry down to Collins, have misemployed their pains in proving, "That the Prophecies which are said to concern the Messiah are so indeterminate, that, on the common rules of interpretation, we can never apply them with certainty rather to him than to any other Jewish Deliverer." For was it true, as it certainly is not, all that could be inferred from thence is only this, That such Prophecies conclude nothing in favour of a particular application, till the obscurities, arising from the intermediate manner in which they are delivered, be removed. There are some obscurities which no human lights

can

can penetrate, but there are none so impervious but must give way to the divine.

It is the proper resort, therefore, of superior wisdom to decide this doubtful question, and tell us, to whom such Prophecies belong.

And must not He, who inspired the Oracle, know of whom he made the prediction? For it was the same spirit who cast a mysterious veil over Truth in the Jewish Prophecies, and became manifest in the Christian Miracles. Thus much these licentious writers themselves will be forced to own, while they reason, as they do here, on the supposition of real Prophecies, and only pretend to bring in question their received meaning.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, That to clear up doubtful Prophecies by the application of Miracles, is a species of evidence which determines the judgment with as perfect assurance as if the prediction had been conceived in the plainest terms of grammar, and in the directest propositions of logic.

But the mistake lay here, The enemies of our Faith saw clearly enough that Miracles could not establish a sense of Prophecies in opposition to all human rules of interpretation; and therefore concluded that Miracles had no influence on Prophecy at all. This was too hasty. They saw in what case the authority of Miracles was excluded; but they would not see where it came in; and so, because a Miracle could not do every thing in establishing the Messiah-character, they would suffer it to do nothing.

But let us leave the perversity of men, to adore the good Providence of God; whose Power, in the use of Miracles, is so admirably fitted to supply and clear up the defects and obscurities, which his Wisdom suffered to remain in the Prophecies.

## II.

Having explained and vindicated the Character of this last great Messenger of God; the subject leads me to consider the nature and genius of the Religion he was sent to propagate amongst men. So that having seen the Truth of his Mission, we may now understand the Use and Necessity of his Work.

St. Paul, in the words of my text, hath marked out those essential qualities which distinguish the CHARACTER and OFFICE of Jesus from all other, whether true or pretended, Messengers from God. *Jesus Christ, says he, is made unto us, Wisdom and Righteousness; and Sanctification and Redemption.* Now as this was addressed both to the Gentile and Jewish converts in the Church of Corinth, it is contrived to shew, in one view, how Christianity hath reformed the depravities of PAGANISM, and supplied the deficiencies of the LAW.

This beautiful summary of Gospel-blessings (for now we turn from the Worker to his work) is so artfully adapted to the Writer's views and purposes, as will deserve a particular explanation.

And here let me previously observe, That though the *Wisdom and Righteousness*,—the *Sanctification and Redemption*, here mentioned, be each respective to the whole race of mankind; yet the GENTILES are more particularly concerned in the WISDOM and RIGHTEOUSNESS; and the JEWS in the SANCTIFICATION and REDEMPTION. In explaining, therefore, these four essential offices in the Messiah-character, I shall consider each of them as referring distinctly and particularly to the One or other of these two great divisions of the religious world.

I. And first, concerning the reformation of the GENTILES, by Gospel *Wisdom and Righteousness*.

1. *Jesus Christ*, saith the Apostle, is *made unto us, WISDOM*. That is, He was *made* Wisdom unto the Gentile world by instructing it in the knowledge of the true God; his nature and attributes: And by explaining the relation in which man stands to his Maker. A WISDOM, which, at this time, the Gentiles greatly wanted: most of them being destitute of that knowledge; and all, without exception, ignorant of that relation.

The early descendants of Noah soon lost the revealed knowledge of their Creator. Which though indeed revived by an extraordinary dispensation of Providence, was however confined within the  
gates

gates of a single family : While the rest of mankind, partly by too great a confidence in that unfaithful guardian of Truth, **TRADITION** ; and partly from too little attention to their better instructor, **REASON**, fell into the most senseless Idolatries.

For living at first scattered abroad in independent tribes, their gross, untutored minds could rise no higher than to the sensible causes of good and evil : the most considerable of which being the elements and heavenly bodies, These became the first object of their worship and veneration. And having experienced them to be, sometimes, the authors of health and plenty ; and sometimes again, of pestilence and famine, they from thence began to entertain an opinion of good and evil Demons.

But being now collected into Bodies, and formed into Communities ; the sudden supply of all the wants of life, which followed, was so sensibly understood, that mistaken gratitude took another channel, and turned as strongly on their deceased Lawgivers, the generous procurers of this their improved condition ; whom they soon venerated and exalted into Gods.

But as civil life introduced and encouraged the culture of the mind as well as body ; both the first, and second mode of worship were, from their manifest absurdities, in danger of falling under the popular contempt. To prevent this mischief, the Legislator diverted the steady attention to either, by confounding them together ; making **ELEMENTARY** and **HERO-WORSHIP** representative of one another ; and then laying on a new cover over both, by the invention of a third species of idolatry, **SYMBOLICAL** of the other two. But a further account of this matter, and how the two original and simple forms produced that more monstrous compound ; in which, first of all, brutes, and then, stocks and stones were worshipped ;—from what accidents of error, from what contrivances of fraud, these prodigies arose, which hath since given so much exercise to the learned, all this is without the limits of the present discourse \*. Let it suffice to observe, that St. Paul hath not

\* See The Divine Legation, Book IV.

aggravated the case, where, in his Epistle to the Romans, he says, that the Gentile world had *changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things* \*.

This was the condition of the Pagan world in general. And though, from time to time, some thinking men arose amongst them of a more enlarged understanding than the common, who, as the same Apostle observes, could, from the *visible things* of a created world, infer the *eternal power and Godhead* of its Author †; yet even these, as he adds, when *they knew God, glorified him not as God* ‡; never so much as once attempting to introduce his worship to any People or Nation amongst whom they lived, or where they had the greatest credit. So that the one true God, though KNOWN in most places, was no where publicly WORSHIPPED but in the land of Judæa only.

This leads me to the second point, “The universal ignorance in the Gentile world, of the relation in which man stands to his Creator.” The Philosophers and Lawgivers had concurred in a general opinion (the absurdity of which is sufficiently exposed by the success of the Hebrew Sage and Legislator in a different conduct) that to teach publicly the knowledge, or to establish nationally the worship of the one true God, would be of great disservice to society; and had therefore kept all consideration of him inclosed within the veil of their MYSTERIES. And further, to hide from their own consciences the fraud and prevarication of such a measure, they first brought those whom they had intrusted with that knowledge, and afterwards, themselves to believe, That the FIRST CAUSE was an extra-mundane Being, too excellent, as well as too remote, to be approached, and addressed to, in the first instance. On which account, they said, he had delegated the government of the world to inferior Deities, his substitutes; and had made Them the immediate objects of religious worship. In cultivating this superstition

\* Chap. i. ver. 23.

† Ver. 20.

‡ Ver. 21.

they found another advantage: it gave a shew of reason to that senseless Polytheism whose rise and progress we have just described: and, at the same time, screened it from the approaches of over-curious inquirers. But then it could not fail of producing very fatal mistakes concerning the close and near relation in which man stands towards God.

All this shews how expedient it was for the happiness of Mankind, that *Jesus* should *be made, unto us, wisdom*; when the most enlightened teachers of it amongst the Gentiles *professing themselves to be wise became fools*, by their *not glorifying him as God* whom they had clearly discovered to be the only true one.

Let us now see the need the Jews had of this *wisdom*; for though, as was said, it be principally objective to the state of the Gentile world, yet it hath its after-view to the followers of the Law; who wanted, likewise, though not in the same degree, the aid of *evangelic wisdom*. For the Character of a national, tutelary Deity, under which, God had been pleased to assume the patronage of their idolatrous Forefathers in Egypt; the Form of their civil constitution, which was Theocratical; and the Genius of their ceremonial worship, which was fitted, through the grossness of their prejudices, to secure the great end of their separation, preservation from idolatry; all these, I say, concurred, amongst a perverse people, to beget wrong notions of the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD; as if They stood by nature, or adoption, in a nearer relation to him than the rest of their fellow-creatures; being chosen for the objects of his special care, on account of some inherent excellence; or at least for some secret fondness which God had, and would indulge, for the illustrious race of Abraham. Vain notions, and of dangerous consequence! which, though they received no real support from *Moses and the Prophets*, were yet, by length of time, so rooted and interwoven in the passions and affections of that people, as to need a *new Law* to weed them out.

And thus was *Jesus* indeed *made Wisdom* both to Jew and Gentile; by instructing the ignorance of the one, and reforming the error

error of the other, in that supreme species of Wisdom, the knowledge of the true God.

2. The advantages of his being *made, unto us*, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, come next to be considered.

As the ignorance of, and mistakes concerning, the **FIRST CAUSE** were so universal in the Gentile world, it can hardly be supposed that the state of **VIRTUE** was in any very good condition amongst them. And in fact, we find that their Morality was neither speculatively solid, nor practically sincere.

The fitness of some actions and the unfitness of others are discoverable from the **NATURAL RELATIONS** and essential difference of things. And this fitness and unfitness are further supported by a **MORAL SENSE**, or an instinctive approbation of good, and dislike of evil. But still, the proper ground of moral obligation is the **WILL OF GOD**: Because all obligation implies an obliger; and *moral fitness* is only a rule to direct us to the will of the obliger; nor is the *moral sense* any other than his arbitrary impression, to dispose the human will to a conformity with the divine. The Will of God, therefore, is the real ground of obligation; or that which properly maketh man accountable for his actions\*.

Now this only solid foundation of morality the Gentile world always wanted: and indeed, while under the ignorance and mistakes mentioned above, could not but want. For their false Gods having, as must needs be, from the private views and intrigues of the Priests their interpreters, many different and contrary Wills, these could never be made the ground of a consistent morality: and the true God being esteemed an extramundane Being, who left his Government to others, afforded no **WILL** at all, for this purpose. So that their only recourse for instruction and practice was to the **MORAL SENSE**, and **NATURAL RELATIONS** of things; which, though they might present a specious system to the understanding, had not weight or authority to incline the Will†.

\* See Divine Legation, Book I. Sect. 4.

† See Divine Legation as above.

For their practice of Virtue (to come to the second point) was as impure as it was unstable. In morals, Example hath the strongest influence : and this influence increaseth in proportion to the dignity of the subject in which it is found. The Example of the Deity, therefore, which inforceth itself on a principle of Religion, must needs have the strongest and widest influence. But the actions of the Pagan Gods, recorded in their sacred stories, were so immoral as could not but highly corrupt the practice of their worshippers. And Antiquity informs us, that in truth it did so.

Nor should a moral cause of this degeneracy from Virtue be forgotten. St. Paul assures us that God, for their punishment *in not retaining him in their knowledge, gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient.* Hence, as he tells us, they were filled with all UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness \*, &c. The account goes on, in so black a catalogue of vice, as sufficiently shews that, at the time *Jesus Christ was made unto us righteousness*, the Pagan world was sunk into the lowest state of misery and corruption.

Nor were the Jews themselves so sound, in these particulars, as not to want this great physician of the Soul. And what was said of the *Wisdom* is true of the *Righteousness*, mentioned in my text ; it hath a secondary reference to the chosen People. For, the wrong notions they had conceived of the *God of their fathers*, and of the relation in which they stood to him, had much viciated and deformed their social virtue. They confined the precept of loving their Brother to the descendants of their fraternal Tribes ; and neglected and despised the rest of the sons of Adam ; who, because ritually unholy and prophane, were deemed to be naturally unrelated to them. A Principle which made them as unfaithful subjects, when for their crimes they were sentenced to the yoke of the Gentiles, as they were merciless neighbours while independent and more powerful ; neither *rendering to Cæsar the things which were*

\* Rom. chap. i. ver. 28, & seq.

*Cæsar's*; nor to God the things which at all times he principally required of them—to *do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly* before him \*. This, and other errors which their false Traditions had introduced, and which some original compliances with the *hardness of their hearts* had occasionally countenanced, made Jesus tell his followers, that, *unless their RIGHTEOUSNESS should exceed the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven* †.

From what hath been said then it appears, that Jesus, as he *is made unto us, wisdom and righteousness*, is to be considered under the Character of a MESSENGER SENT from God, to instruct men in the ways of RELIGION and VIRTUE. How much such a one was wanting, we have endeavoured to shew in a fair representation of the state of BOTH, at the time of his coming.

II. But this was not the whole of his Character. He was a MESSENGER FORETOLD; as appears, and is insinuated from what is further said of him, That he was *made unto us Sanctification and Redemption*.

To such as are unacquainted with the present state of Theology amongst us, it may perhaps seem strange that I should stop, in this place, to observe, that *Sanctification* and *Redemption* are as true and essential offices in the Character of Jesus, and as extensive to Mankind, as the *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* assigned unto it. But there are some amongst us, who give a figurative sense to the latter attributes in my text; and in reality confine the character of Jesus to that of a Messenger sent from God, to instruct the world in truths of religious *Wisdom*, and moral *Righteousness*.

But to suppose, that when the Son of God is said to be *made wisdom and righteousness*, we must understand by it that he really taught men *Wisdom* and *Righteousness*; and yet, when he is said to be *made sanctification and redemption*, he did not really *sanctify* and *redeem*; but that, by instructing men in a more pure and perfect

\* Micah, chap. vi. ver. 8.

† Matt. chap. v. ver. 20.

worship, he only excelled all the IMAGINARY ; and abrogated all the CARNAL *sanctifications* and *redemptions*, both of Jews and Gentiles ; to suppose this, I say, is the highest violation of all rational interpretation : and gives us a meaner idea of the eternal Son of God than a Pagan Sophist would have entertained of him on hearing St. Paul's first sermon at Athens. But this perversity can be charitably accounted for no otherwise than from a violent disgust these men have taken at some current explanations of the *doctrine of Redemption* ; fitter indeed to discredit, than to confirm or recommend this fundamental principle of our holy Religion. But this is a matter which requires a different treatment. I shall consider it in its proper place \* ; and now proceed with the subject before us.

I have observed, that as *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* were principally addressed to the Gentiles ; so *Sanctification* and *Redemption* were directed to the Jews. But, as a regard to the Jewish people was not excluded in the former ; so neither was a regard to the Gentiles excluded in the latter.

It is easily seen why the representation of Jesus's *being made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness* is particularly addressed to the Gentiles : They most wanted those blessings. Nor is it more difficult to apprehend why the representation of his being *made unto us Sanctification and Redemption* is particularly directed to the Jews : for in their custody were deposited the *living Oracles*, which explain that state and condition of man, from whence arises the necessity of *Sanctification* and *Redemption*.

I. But let us consider the words as they lye in order. *Jesus Christ* (says the Apostle) *was made unto us* SANCTIFICATION ; that is, he *sanctified*, or made us holy.

It was a received opinion in the ancient world that human nature had contracted a stain or pollution : and that not only particular purifyings, but also some general *Sanctification* was necessary to put man in a capacity of being restored to the favour of the Deity.

\* Divine Legation, Book IX.

Whether this Opinion arose from the remains of a Tradition concerning the FALL ; or from every man's conscious feeling of his own disorders ; or whether both concurred to its establishment, is very uncertain. However it had that tone of the voice of Nature, Universality. And though it gave occasion to infinite superstitions in the rituals of national lustrations, yet the necessity of some real *Sanctification* seems fairly to be deduced from it.

When God, therefore, separated the Jewish people, the first object of their Legislator's ministry was to render them pure and holy. And as by reason of the inveteracy of their prejudices, and the grossness of their apprehensions, the real means of purifying human nature were to be conveyed under the cover of such rites and ceremonies as were then in use amongst men ; so because the common way of making a people holy, was to adopt them into the protection of a tutelary God ; and of rendering particulars clean, was by ablutions and other cathartic rites ; the Almighty was pleased to assume the titles of their national God, and regal Governor ; and to institute, in the offices of his worship lustrations, and expiatory sacrifices, as well for particulars as the Community. On these accounts it is that he tells them, *Ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation* \* : for the regal and sacerdotal were the two peculiar characters of ancient *sanctity*.

*But the LAW having only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, could never make the comers thereunto perfect* † : therefore the true *Sanctification* of mankind was reserved for the ministry of Jesus ; when being collected together into one people, under his government as LORD ; and received into his protection by the *justification of faith* in him as MESSIAH, they became *a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD and an holy nation* ‡, as the Apostle calls them, alluding to the title given to the Hebrews by Moses ; and transferring it to the Christian Church in a complotory sense, as it was applied to the Jewish, in a typical.

\* Exod. chap. xix. ver. 6.

† Heb. chap. x. ver. 1.

‡ 1 Pet. chap. xi. ver. 9.

But a matter of so high importance as the completion of God's religious dispensations, in the final *Sanctification* of mankind, will deserve a fuller explanation.

When the *Sanctifier* (whose character and office cannot well be considered separately) was accused, by those who traversed his ministry, of purposing to overturn the established Religion, he answered, *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil* \*. How he executed this commission, in the character of SANCTIFIER, we are now to consider.

Under the old Law, God was pleased to take upon himself the office of KING; he assigned the office of PRIEST to Aaron; and that of PROPHET, to Moses; the Priest being the MEDIATOR or Advocate for men to God; and the Prophet the MESSENGER of God to Men. Now the Messiah taking all these offices on himself; and uniting them in his own Person, did, in the truest and exactest sense, *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*. For by *the Law and the Prophets* is meant the whole of the Jewish dispensation, as delivered by Moses, and explained and illustrated by those holy men, whom God, from time to time, raised up to govern and instruct his people.

This Institution consisted of three parts; the POLITICAL, the CEREMONIAL, and the MORAL, under which was contained the SPIRITUAL.

1. The *political* part was a THEOCRACY. The purposes of this extraordinary form of government, as they related to the carnal administration of the Mosaic Oeconomy, I have considered elsewhere †. But the spiritual end was to introduce the dominion of the Son, which was to be extended to all mankind. The *Prophets*, the interpreters of the Law, whom, as well as the *Law* itself, Jesus tells us, he was sent to *fulfil*, inform us at large, how this

\* Matt. chap. v. ver. 17.

† See Divine Legation, Book V. Sect. 2.

peculiar regimen was to become an universal blessing. First by the resignation of the Theocratic dominion to the Son \*; and secondly, by extending that dominion over the whole race of mankind †. Thus the Messiah *fulfilled* both what the genius of the *Law* and the inspiration of the *Prophets* foretold of him; as it concerned the government political. And in so doing he assumed the title of *KING of the Jews*.

2. The second division of the Mosaic Law was the *ceremonial*: a ceremonial, which heavily loaded every part of God's worship with multifarious and irksome rites. Now though the common condition of humanity declares that this duty, especially the public part of it, can never be decently or properly discharged without the aid of some exterior ceremonies; yet the minute observance of so complicated a Ritual tends rather to stifle than to invigorate the spirit of devotion. We may therefore reasonably conclude, that these things, which have no moral worth or value inherent in them, were not instituted on their own account, but for the sake of some occasional good they were found capable of producing. And of this, we have clear intimations in the writings of the Prophets. They frequently tell us that the *ceremonial Law* was of no use or value in itself; but that, the thing in which God most delighted, was the moral Law of righteousness ‡. If then the Jewish Ritual was of so slight account with the Institutor himself, it may be reasonably asked how it came to be so minutely delivered and so scrupulously exacted in his service? In this likewise the Prophets will instruct us. It was imposed to restrain a headstrong people from Idolatry, to which they were violently and obstinately carried §: and, for that purpose, it had a perpetual reference to the then reigning Superstitions. But as this security from idolatry (considering them as a People) was for the sake of preserving a

\* Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

† Ibid. chap. xi. 10.

‡ Amos chap. v. 21, & seq. Micah chap. vi. 7, 8.

§ Jerem. chap. vii. 22, 23. Ezek. chap. xx. 24, 25.

found and pure foundation for the future dispensation, of which, This was only the rudiments, it pleased the divine wisdom that the ceremonial Law should not only be directed against those superstitions, but should likewise be typical of all the great parts of that future dispensation : and whoever examines the *ceremonial Law* with the care and attention so important a study requires, will confess that both one and the other were equally in the intention of the Law-giver\*.

The ultimate end therefore of these rites being to prefigure the death and sufferings of Christ, He may, with a peculiar propriety, be allowed to call himself the *fulfiller of the Ceremonial Law*. It being incomplete and destitute of its final purpose, till Jesus had performed the whole of that mission which the *ceremonial Law*, by prefiguring, had predicted. And when that was once performed, the Types of course were to cease. Now these types consisting of various kinds of sacrificial rites, Jesus by offering up himself on the cross for the sins of mankind, as was foretold by the Prophets, eminently *fulfilled* the ceremonial Law, in quality of PRIEST.

3. The last and noblest branch of the Jewish Law was the *Moral* : which instructs man in all his relations, whether to his common nature, to God, or his fellow-creatures. This, though delivered pure by Moses, and according to the truth of things, did yet, like the two other branches (as we have seen above) need the master-hand of this divine Teacher : who, in delivering to mankind a more perfect system of moral duty as was predicted of him †, discharged the office of PROPHET, or of a *Messenger from God* ; as in that of PRIEST he discharged the office of *the Messenger foretold*.

But under the *moral*, as we have said, was comprised the *spiritual*. And it was this which was more peculiarly the prophetic office : whose business it was not only to give to every part, in

\* See Divine Legation, Book IV. Sect. 6.

† Isaiah, chap. xi. 5. Chap. xlii. 1, 4.

this œconomy, its due rank ; but to foretel the future fortunes of all ; How the Political should be EXTENDED ; the Ceremonial FULFILLED ; and the Moral, PURIFIED and exalted.

Thus we see, from the nature, end, and condition of this *political, ceremonial, and moral* œconomy, that Jesus was the *fulfiller of the Law* ; and, from his doing this in the very manner the inspired men of old predicted, that he was likewise the *fulfiller of the Prophets* \*. Hence he became truly and properly the SANCTIFICATION of the *People of God* : and through them, of the whole *Church of Christ*.

This is that aggregate or corporate holiness to which the Gentile nations blindly aspired ; and of which, the Jewish people had gained only the shadow.

But, besides this GENERAL *Sanctification* ; which, as we have shewn, is the immediate office of the Son ; there was a PARTICULAR, by which each individual was cleansed and purified ; and this was performed through the ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT, the *Comforter*, whom Jesus, on his leaving the world, had promised to send upon the faithful, to remain with them for ever †. Who, by the effusion of divine grace shed abroad in their hearts, effects that purity of mind, which all other ritual modes of private lustration tried at in vain, or at best did but typically represent.

Now both these purifications, the aggregate and particular, make together, that true *Sanctification*, of which Jesus is said in my text to be the author, and bestower on mankind.

We have observed that *Sanctification* and *Redemption* are addressed to the Jews primarily ; as *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* are to the Gentiles. But as the former graces had a secondary reference to the Jews, so the latter, as we shall now see, have the same reference to the Gentiles.

\* See Divine Legation, Book VI. sect. 6.

† John xiv. 16. Chap. xvi. 7.

The want of a *Sanctifier* in the Pagan world was still more urgent and deplorable than in the Jewish. For the Gentiles having received DEMONS for their tutelary Gods, and devoted themselves to unclean spirits by their national worship, the PUBLIC was become, in the saddest sense of the word, PROPHANE. And, by administering their demonic rites in all the unnatural and exorbitant practices of murder and uncleanness, PARTICULARS were become in the highest degree IMPURE.

Thus Gentile impiety and pollution being at its height, and the Jewish holiness and purity exterior only, and imperfect, there was a pressing NECESSITY of *Jesus's* being *made unto us, Sanctification*.

2. But this was not the ultimate benefit bestowed on man, through the ministry of *Jesus*. *Sanctification* was only preparatory to a greater blessing: and, like the wedding-garment in the parable, a habit of dignity given to appear in before *the Lord our Redeemer*.

For, in the last place, the Apostle tells us, *he was made unto us, REDEMPTION*.

Amongst the many gracious dispensations of God to Mankind, the Mosaic history informs us of one, in which *the depth of the riches both of his Wisdom and Knowledge* claims our more particular admiration. And this is the FREE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY to the first man; and, through him, to his Posterity, on the easy condition, we find, annexed unto it: which Adam having too easily violated, he and his whole race returned into a state of mortality and corruption.

From this bondage under death and sin, God, in his infinite mercy, decreed to deliver us. And the condition of a remitted forfeiture being as absolutely in the breast of the Remitter, as the condition on which the blessing was originally conferred; he was pleased, it should be done by ONE man's willingly offering himself to death for an atonement for ALL. That *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one should many be made righteous* \*.

\* Romans, chap. v. 19.

How agreeable this succinct account of Man's FALL and RESTORATION is, to what the best and most received philosophy teacheth us both of God and Man, shall be considered at large in a fitter place\*.

This future *Redemption* of the world had been promised, even from the time of the *Fall*, to the holy men of old, in terms more or less obscure, as best fitted the dispensation under which the prediction was delivered. The Chosen People had a more defined image of it in their typical redemption from the slavery of Egypt, and their admission to the temporal blessings of the land of Canaan. It was still more circumstantially figured in their public ritual, through the ministration of expiatory sacrifices, performed with many ceremonies plainly descriptive of the great sacrifice on the Cross, for the spiritual *Redemption* of mankind.

This people, then, must hear with conviction, and, as many of them as were unprejudiced, must confess with pleasure, that *Jesus Christ*, by being *made unto us Redemption*, was the true completion of the *Law and the Prophets*.

Nor was this blessing of *Redemption* without a secondary reference to the state and condition of the Gentiles; whose Religion was not merely ineffectual, like the Jewish, to redeem them from the chains of death and sin, but such as had brought them under the more disgraceful bondage of subjection to the Devil, those wicked spirits, whom they worshipped and adored as their patron Gods.

This was the condition both of Jews and Gentiles, when the Messiah came to set men free. And here let it be observed, in honour of those two Characteristic miracles, the *raising the dead*, and the *casting out devils*, that the one elegantly designed his office of redeeming the Jews from the *power of the grave*, and the other his office of freeing the Gentiles from the *tyranny of Demons*. The beauty in this disposition of the œconomy was too striking to be passed over in silence: Otherwise, I think, even this moderated

\* Divine Legation, Book IX.

use, of spiritualizing the miracles, should be forborn; as fanciful and precarious. We can conceive no otherwise of the miracles of a divine Person coming from God, let the peculiar mode of his dispensation be what it will, than that they should be objective to the corporal infirmities of men. Now between these and their spiritual disorders, there is, by their common qualities of want and distress, so much similitude and so natural an analogy, as affords no ground of reasonable supposition, that one was a designed or prophetic representation of the other.

Thus have I endeavoured to shew, which was the main purpose of this discourse, *That Jesus is made unto us, Sanctification and Redemption*, in as true and real a sense as he is our *Wisdom and Righteousness*. Nor is this a matter of small moment. The teaching *Wisdom and Righteousness* made his mission **EXPEDIENT**: but the bestowing *Sanctification and Redemption* made it **NECESSARY**.

To instruct the world in the knowledge of one God, and in the practice of moral virtue, was, without doubt, putting us into the road of the divine favour; and making our attainment of the supreme good more easy and expeditious. But God, whose *mercies are over all his works*, and who, in this very revelation, hath informed us, that from those to whom little is given, much will not be required \*, would have received his miserable creatures to his mercy, in what condition soever he had suffered them to remain, if so be they had taken care to make the best use of the little that was afforded them.

But *Sanctification and Redemption* do more than shew us into the road of God's favour: They restore us to the free privilege of **LIFE AND IMMORTALITY**; which man having forfeited, by a breach of the condition on which it was bestowed, had no pretence to reclaim; so that whenever it was restored, it might be given on such conditions as the all-gracious Donor should think fit to impose. It is restored: and the conditions are **FAITH** in, and **OBEDIENCE** to,

\* Luke xii. 48.

a crucified SAVIOUR ; who, by this sacrifice of himself, became the *Sanctification and Redemption* of mankind. The consequence is, that these are not only useful and *expedient* for procuring God's favour, but absolutely *necessary* for our recovery of life and immortality.

This is placing CHRISTIANITY on its proper basis, a foundation of real strength and solidity.

But when the presumption of men tempts them to disjoin what God hath put together, not only the benefits of that union are lost, but other various, and unthought-of evils arise, which subject the religious œconomy, thus abused, to every kind of injury ; dishonouring the Author of our Faith ; and exposing the Christian profession to perpetual insults.

This was never more unhappily verified than in the case before us.

1. For he who considers Jesus only in the light of a Republiſher of the Law of nature, can hardly entertain a higher opinion of the Saviour of the world than ſome have done of SOCRATES, whom Erasmus eſteemed an object of devotion, and many a good Proteſtant hath thought to be divinely inſpired. For was not Socrates, by his preaching up *moral virtue*, and by his dying to bear witneſs to the *unity* of the God, *made*, to the Grecian people, and (by means of their extended commerce of politeneſs) to the reſt of mankind, *wiſdom and Righteouſneſs*? And what more did Jeſus ? for, according to the principles of this paganized Chriſtianity, his titles of MESSIAH and REDEEMER are reduced to mere figurative and accommodated terms. But theſe bold extremes men ran into through their ignorance of the nature of thoſe prophecies which foretel his advent ; and the abſurdity of thoſe ſystems, which pretend to explain his office.

2. As this Theology degrades Jeſus to the low condition of a Grecian Sophiſt ; ſo it renders his Religion obnoxious to the insults of every daring Impoſtor.

He

He was sent, say these new Doctors of the Church, to teach mankind the worship of the true God, and the practice of moral righteousness\*.

“ This will be readily allowed, replies an understanding MAHOMETAN † : And on this very principle, we hold, that when Jesus had done his office, and mankind had again relapsed, into *anti-christian* Idolatry and Polytheism, as before into *Pagan*, God sent OUR PROPHET, who worked the like sudden and sensible reformation in the NORTH-EAST, that your Prophet did in the NORTH-WEST.”

What reply now will our rational Divine make to this apology for ISMAELISM ?

All he has to say is, “ That Jesus and his Apostles have every where intimated, that his Gospel is the last of God’s dispensations ; on the terms of which our final doom is irrevocably to be decided : so that all future pretenders to the like office and character must needs be esteemed impostors.”

But here a DEIST would come in, and take advantage of our distress ; for it is to be observed alike of all these shifting defences of fanciful, and unscriptural systems, that they only supply new arms

\* A celebrated Frenchman, who writes on all subjects indifferently, and perhaps, knew better what he was about than these Divines, goes still further, and affirms, That Christianity is not only no more than the Religion of nature perfected, but that *it could not possibly* be any more.—“ *Nôtre Religion révélée n’est même, et ne pouvoit être, que cette Loi naturelle perfectionnée.*” *Discours sur le Théisme*, par M. de Voltaire.

† The Alcoran teaches, that Jesus did not suffer on the cross. Yet Mahomet denied our Saviour’s Divinity. Why then such aversion to the *passion* ? Evidently for this reason, the doctrine of REDEMPTION followed ; and that completed the scheme of *revelation*, and (as we shall see) shut out the Impostor’s pretences. M. Otter, a very intelligent traveller, of the Academy Royal of Inscriptions, tells us of a conference he had with a learned Persian. The Mahometan said, they revered all our sacred writings, except St. Paul’s—*qu’ils respectent tous, excepté Saint Paul.* [ *Voisage en Turquie et en Perse*, vol. i. p. 22.] Why was this *exception* ? On the same principle : because St. Paul is full of the doctrine of REDEMPTION ; explains the Christian system by it ; and makes the whole Faith depend upon it.

to the various adversaries of our faith ; A Deist, I say, would be ready to reply, " That it is indeed true that Jesus hath declared his own Mission to be the LAST : but that this is the artful expedient of every pretended Messenger from Heaven, in order to perpetuate his own scheme, and to obviate the danger of an antiquated authority. The Impostor, Mahomet himself, hath done the same. He, who here obtrudes his armed pretensions upon us, hath secured the duration of his sensual Religion by the very same contrivance : A thing, in his ideas, so much of course, that he did not even object to Jesus's use of it, who had employed it before him ; and for no other purpose than to cut off his, and all following pretensions to the like character. On the contrary, he avowed and maintained the general truth of the Nazarite's commission. Now (pursues the Deist) a method employed by a confessed impostor is taken up with an ill grace by the defender of true religion. But I draw a further consequence (says he) against the Gospel, from this representation of Christianity. For if the preaching of moral truth and righteousness were the whole of Jesus's character and office, then his mission did not answer its purpose, the lasting reformation of mankind, in the knowledge of God, and in the practice of virtue : since the world soon fell back again into the state from which Jesus had delivered it ; as appears from the history of the times in which Mahomet appeared, and the advantages he made of that degeneracy."

Thus subjected to the insults and injuries of every kind of impostors, who set upon deluding the credulous, either by inventing NEW Revelations or by decrying the OLD, do these REPUBLISHERS expose the holy faith of Jesus : That faith which, we are told, was *founded on a rock*, impregnable to the assaults of men and demons ; to the sophisms of infidelity, and the prestiges of imposture ! And so, indeed, it is, if we will take it as we find it ; if we will receive it as it came from above ; if we will preserve it pure and entire as it was delivered to the Saints, THE REDEMPTION

OF THE WORLD, BY THE SON OF GOD, IN THE VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF UPON THE CROSS.

This secures \* the character of Jesus from the insults of false pretenders ; and his Gospel from the injuries of false reasoners.

For, first of all, if Jesus did, indeed, *redeem* mankind. and restore them to their lost inheritance, the scheme and progress of revelation is completed : which beginning at the LAPSE, naturally and necessarily ends in the restoration and recovery of LIFE AND IMMORTALITY by the death and passion of our Lord. CHRISTIANITY considered in this view (and in this view only Scripture gives it us to consider) soon detects all the artful pretences of imposture ; and secures its own honour by virtue of its very essence : the great scene of providence being now closed, in a full completion of its one, regular, entire, and eternal purpose.

Secondly, if Jesus indeed *redeemed* mankind, then did he neither preach nor die in vain : it not being in man's power, with all his malice and perverseness, to defeat or make void the great purpose of his Coming. For though one part of his Mission was to instruct the world in *Wisdom* and *Righteousness*, which it was in man's power to forget and neglect ; yet, what is chiefly essential in his character, and peculiar in his office, the *Sanctification* and *Redemption* of the world, man could not frustrate nor render ineffectual : For it is not in his power to make that to be undone which is once done and perfected.

The fastidious Caviller therefore hath employed his pains to very little purpose in attempting to discredit Revelation from this topic. His laboured discourses on the moral state of the world, before and since the coming of Christ, are quite beside the question. For, though, where the comparison is fully and impartially stated, I will venture to say, the advantage will be found to lie on the side of our Religion : yet supposing the truths preached by Jesus, and

\* See Div. Leg. Book IX. where the conformity of this Doctrine to right reason and the nature of things is evinced at large.

the assistance given by the Holy Spirit, have not much improved the general morals of mankind ; How does this tend to the discredit of the Gospel ? unless the Gospel can be proved to have no natural tendency to make men better ? But this is so desperate an undertaking, that, I believe, infidelity will hardly be persuaded to engage in it. Indeed the contrary is so true, that, as I have shewn elsewhere, when you lay together the state of PAGAN and CHRISTIAN virtue, one manifest and essential difference is found between them ; which is this, That in the Gentile world, men often acted wrong UPON PRINCIPLE ; in the Christian always AGAINST PRINCIPLE \*. Now, not to insist upon the necessary restraint this must be upon vice ; it plainly demonstrates the NATURAL TENDENCY of the Gospel-truths to make men virtuous, and, to enforce them with a stronger impulse, did not suit the genius of a rational religion, whose objects was free agency.

But the proper answer to this idle cavil is taken, as we say, from the topic before us. Instruction of the world in *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* was but the secondary end of Christ's mission. The first and primary, was to become its *sanctification* and *redemption* ; the one must needs be common to every revelation coming from God ; the other is peculiar to the christian : and this, as we have shewn, cannot possibly be frustrated, or rendered ineffectual.

To conclude from all that hath been said : As we should not affect to pry into the nature of those things which God hath been pleased to withhold from our search, and to cover with the sacred veil of Mystery ; so neither should we reject a Truth, expressly delivered, because we may not fully comprehend all the reasons on which it stands. In a word, as we should not venture to go on where the silence of Scripture directs us to stop ; so neither should we presume to stop where, with so loud a voice, it commands us to go on.

Men have been made sufficiently sensible of the mischiefs attending the first of these indiscretions, the being *wise* ABOVE *what*

\* Div. Leg. Book iv. § 2.

*is written:* I have here endeavoured to shew, that the other, the being *wise* AGAINST *what is written*, is not attended with fewer inconveniencies. What then remains but to chuse the middle way, the way to become *wise unto salvation*; and, neither, in practice or speculation, to ADD to, nor to DIMINISH from, the WORD OF GOD?

Let us therefore religiously adhere to the doctrine of my text in its just extent, That *Jesus Christ, of God, is made unto us WISDOM and RIGHTEOUSNESS, and SANCTIFICATION and REDEMPTION.*

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S E R M O N VI.

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE  
MESSENGERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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MATTH. x. ver. 16.

BEHOLD I SEND YOU FORTH AS SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES:  
BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS, AND HARMLESS AS  
DOVES.

**S**UCH was the direction given by our blessed Lord to his Disciples, when he sent them out to preach the *glad tidings of the Gospel*.

The CHARACTER of the Christian Mission is denoted in these words, *Behold I send you forth as sheep* :—And the CONDITION of an unbelieving World in the following, *I send you in the midst of wolves*. Though the Faith was to be propagated only by the mild measures of persuasion, yet even this would provoke the *wolfish disposition* of the *powers of darkness*, to put in ure all the iniquitous contrivance of fraud and violence for its suppression.

Their

Their provident Master, therefore, in the concluding words of my text, delivers them a rule for the innocence and prudence of their own conduct. *Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* A direction equally respecting their PRIVATE and their PUBLIC Character. Whereby, the first might correspond with the dignity of their office; and the other, with the objects of their care. So that, as men, the HUMAN virtues; as missionaries, the SOCIAL are recommended to their practice: and both, under the familiar images of the serpent's wisdom, and the innocence of the dove.

What these human virtues are, the allusion in the figurative EXPRESSION will discover: What the social, must be determined by the occasion of the PRECEPT.

*Be ye therefore* (says the blessed Jesus) *wise as serpents and harmless as doves.* A direction, conveyed in two proverbial sayings, whose import the Disciples perfectly understood.

The first alludes to a vulgar superstition of the ancient world, which gave credit to certain artists, who pretended to the power of rendering serpents innoxious by the force of charms, and incantations. The men who traded in this imposture, in order to hide their frequent miscarriages, made the people believe that some of these serpents had gotten a trick as good as their own; which was to *stop their ears* to their incantments. This counterplot was as readily believed, as the other's magic power, in an age, when every thing was well received, which excited the hearer's admiration. Hence the proverb of *the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, c'arm be never so sweetly*: by which, Moralists would infer the wisdom and safety of abstaining from unlawful pleasures.

The second, of being *harmless as doves*, alludes to as ancient and as fanciful an error of the Naturalists, that *the dove is without a gall*; or, at least, bears it not within\*.

\* Ἄνεκα μὲν ἔχουσα χολὴν αὐτοφύει, ἀλλ' ὅφ' ἐνέμει δαχρύμασι γράφουσι [Αἰγύπτιοι σιμωγιστὰς ζῷ. γεφύουσι, ἔχουσι τὰ ὀπίθια ἑρβὰ. ἐν ἰνίοις γὰρ τὴν χολὴν ἔχου. Horapollinis Hierogl. l. ii. c. 48.

The whole of this monition therefore, to the disciples in their private character, implies, That they should learn to abstain from all unlawful, unmanly and intemperate pleasures ; and to suppress in themselves all the sentiments of rage, anger, and revenge. The serpent's wisdom being directed against the CONUPISCIBLE passions, as the dove's innocence is against the IRASCIBLE : and both together make one general precept for the subjection of our brutal nature to the rational : in which consists the exercise of the *human* virtues.

Could any thing be more harmless than this method of propagating religion ? Could any thing be more holy than the manners of its propagators ? What regard to the rights of men, to the Laws of society, was enjoined to the Offerers of the Gospel ! What neglect of the interests of flesh and blood was required of the Receivers of it ! TRUTH was the lasting foundation on which Jesus erected his Church : and VIRTUE the living principle which was to actuate its members.

Indeed the purity of his intentions and the rectitude of his measures are so evident from the evangelic history of his life and death, that the most stubborn infidel is ready to clear him of fraudulent imposture, and to centre all his suspicions in a well-meaning ENTHUSIASM.

This is the last miserable refuge of obstinate impiety. And the order of the discourse, which now brings us to consider the precept of the text, as it respects the messengers of Jesus in their PUBLIC CAPACITY, will enable us to expose it in all its nakedness.

*Be ye THEREFORE wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* Wherefore ? because they were *sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves* ; that is, unarmed and defenceless amidst the *powers of the Prince of this world*. The virtues, recommended to them under their public capacity, were, we see, objective to these powers ; and therefore, of the *social* kind ; and consisted in prudence and justice ; as the other, recommended to them in their private capacity, and objective to themselves, were of the *human* ; and consisted in temperance  
and

and forbearance. And here let me observe, in honour of God's word (which should be the principal end of all discourses from this place), the mutual connexion and reciprocal influence, which the two parts have on one another. The *human* virtues were to recommend their MISSION; and the *social*, to recommend their PERSONS. But to proceed.

If Jesus had been an Enthusiast, there was no time when the fanatic spirit would so forcibly have broken out as at this juncture; the critical juncture of sending his disciples abroad to convert the world. An Enthusiast, possessed with the high glory of propagating and establishing a new religion, to arise and be denominated from himself, would have his spiritual passions kindled and inflamed to their utmost bearing, at that important moment of commencing his enterprise.

But the words of Jesus upon this occasion bespeak their Author to be perfectly cool, and collected within himself. *Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves.*

Let us reflect upon them with attention. Though I am not altogether of opinion with those who consider the premonition (to which the words of my text allude) so frequently repeated by Jesus to his followers, of the various persecution that awaited the profession of his Gospel, as the clearest evidence of his prophetic spirit: because I think a common observer of the state and genius of the then prevailing superstitions might easily foresee what would be the early fate of a Religion supported by no other powers than those of Reason and Grace, when it openly opposed its truth and purity to a world sunk deep in error and corruption. Yet so far must always be confessed, that this serious attention to the event would not have made part of the Character of a heated and inflamed Enthusiast. When we find, therefore, the founder of our holy religion calmly attentive to the reception his Doctrine was likely to meet with from the People, and provident of the treatment his Servants were sure to receive from the Magistrate, we must needs conclude that he then possessed himself in that dignity of repose,

under a comprehensive view of his scheme which became a great Prophet, superior to all the infirmities as well as chances of humanity.

But his provision for his faithful servants did not stop at the salutary warning here given unto them. When he had hinted at the treatment of the world towards them, *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves*, he directs what should be their conduct to the world; *Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*. A direction which none under the influence of a fanatic spirit would be either forward to give, or fond to see observed. For religious Enthusiasm, as we know by sad experience, places its chief glory in despising human prudence, and in violating and trampling upon human peace.

Its two great states or stages are the SUFFERINGS and the TRIUMPHS of its deluded Instruments. And, in both, this hot and fiery spirit fatally hurries them into the most mischievous extremes.

At the new birth of a visionary Sect, which is generally the suffering state of Enthusiasm, those under its influence are apt to give great advantages to their opposers, and to bring as great discredit on themselves. And all for want of this *wisdom of the serpent*; for want of using these means of human prudence which both reason and nature urge and dictate to us, for the support of our opinions, and for the preservation of our persons.

The method Enthusiasm chuses to employ in propagating its tenets is the reverse to this *wisdom of the serpent*; as we may see by comparing the practice of modern Enthusiasts with that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles; who had formed his conduct on this monition of his Master. *He became all things to men, that he might gain some*\*: They comply in nothing, through a visionary fervour to gain all. St. Paul, with this allegoric picture of *wisdom* before his eyes, was polite, artful, and insinuating; always on the watch to take honest advantages of every principle, and practice

\* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

of his adversaries; in order the more effectually to recommend the Gospel of Jesus to their favour \*. The Fanatic is stubborn, rude, positive, and overbearing. So far from being disposed to turn the best side of his adversaries' wrong opinions forward, the better to set off his own, that he 'is ever prompt to misrepresent their right ones: and abhors the temptation of suffering you to be of his Faith; unless you express it in his own words, and allow him all his consequences. And mistaking the precept of *being at enmity with the world* for an aversion to men as well as principles, he helps forward an unjust persecution from the public; when he should be reconciling particulars to his pretended mission.

Nor is his conduct less extravagant now it concerns the care of his person, than before, in the recommendation of his opinions. Part of the *wisdom of the serpent* consists, as Jesus elsewhere explains it, in prudently evading the fury of our enemies; so that when they persecute us in one city, we may fly to another †; a point of prudence, which St. Paul, on many occasions, as temperately as successfully put in practice ‡. And when the same prudence directed him to withstand the Magistrate's Furies, it was not as a Teacher of truth, but as a Citizen of Rome §. But neither precept nor example is sufficient to moderate the fervors of fanatic zeal. So that having stirred up the people to mischief, and provoked the magistrate to injustice, he closeth the scene, without either the Confessor's merit, or his Master's passport, in rushing with presumptuous confidence on the flames.

This then being the native hue and complexion of powerless Enthusiasm, Is it possible to believe, that He who, in the direction of being *wise as serpents*, discredited and condemned all this extravagance of conduct, could himself be an impotent Enthusiast?

But let us next see the visage Enthusiasm puts on when it is now become triumphant, and has gotten the People in its train. If,

\* Acts xvii.

† Matt. x. 23.

‡ Acts ix. 25. xiv. 6. xvii. 10. xxiii. 17. xxv. 11.

§ Acts xvi. 37. xxii. 25.

in its suffering state, it haply wore the face of patience and forbearance, it now shews, by the sudden change of countenance, that it esteemed them the virtues rather of the time than of the person. For when Power hath changed hands, and the magistrate is come over to its side, it is ever ready to turn the same authority against others which had been so abusively employed against itself. And if haply it contents itself to stay the slower issue of the more artful and clandestine methods of discouragement and wholesome severities, yet if these do not succeed against differing opinions, it falls with the quicker appetite on the more direct and open measures of violence and oppression.

Now the unbeliever will be forced to own, that Jesus, with only the common provision which a great genius can never be without, might fairly foresee, that a Religion so pure, so reasonable, so useful to mankind, against which there was nothing to oppose but the absurdities and mischiefs of Paganism, must, by the use of common prudence in the propagation of it, notwithstanding the opposition which was as easily foreseen, at length become superior and triumphant. So that an Enthusiast, who had left instructions how his Ministers should act when that time came, would naturally direct them to exert all their zeal; to demolish the high places, to cut down the groves, to slay the false prophets with the sword, and to establish a perfect uniformity. For there is nothing in which the fanatic spirit so delights to riot as in the abusive application of the rules and principles of one of God's dispensations to another, though of a genius directly opposite.

On the other hand, our ever-blessed Master, who not only foresaw, but predicted the progress and superiority of his Gospel, restrains his ministers from all ambitious politics, and unjust violence, in the single precept of *being harmless as doves*. For while they observed this rule, and preserved this character, they could never aim at usurping on the State, or tyrannizing in the Church: But would leave the Magistrate his sword; would leave the People their conscience; and be content to remit the religious fate of Kingdoms  
to

to the wise providence of God ; who in his own good time will bring all men to the knowledge of his Truth.

Thus hath the holy Founder of our Faith digged up, by the very roots, the whole system of Imposture. He has quelled the wildness of the Fanatic in the command to be *wise as serpents* ; he hath checked the ambition of the Enthusiast in the command to be *harmless as doves* : so that the unbeliever must either acquit him of these affections, or must retract what he seemed so willing to allow him, the greatness of his talents and abilities. For, if we will credit these men, The great support of his Character was a well-directed enthusiasm : and yet he effectually contrived to damp its influence at that very crisis when an Enthusiast would have let loose his genius, and given it the utmost force and moment.

It is seen, that in this account of a well-directed Enthusiasm, I have supposed it to consist of an equal mixture of EXTRAVAGANCE and ART : the first betraying itself in the struggle, and the last in its application of the fruits of victory. And whatever inconsistency there may appear to be in this representation, I apprehend the fault lies only in the contradictions of our corrupt nature.

It is commonly indeed supposed, that the more wild and extravagant a fanatic temper is, the more clear it must needs be of all fraud and artifice : But both reason and experience are ready to shew us our mistake.

Fanaticism is a fire, which heats the mind indeed, but heats without *purifying*. It stimulates and ferments all the passions ; but it rectifies none of them : and thus leaving the appetites unsubdued ; pride, vanity, and ambition, insinuate themselves into the impotent and disordered mind, under the disguise of purity, holiness, and perfection. And while they are at work, Religion, which lent them these more honest appellations, will be so far from curbing the owner in the use of oblique means, that the strongest influence of fanaticism will be naturally directed to push him upon them, as the best instruments for the ready introduction of what he calls the *truth*.

Nor

Nor does the **PHYSICAL** state of the Enthusiast's mind give any stronger check to fraudulent practice than the **MORAL**. For when this passion or affection hath taken possession of a great genius, who, if he chance to have a lively imagination, is as subject to its controul as the meanest, the violence of his fervours makes him impatient of stop or defeat, in what he takes to be the *cause of God*; and consequently, to cast about for any kind of means to remove or repair it: readily persuading himself, that any means are lawful: And his superior genius will enable him to find them; and when found to improve them to their utmost use, by all the arts of fraudulent address. Hence, if we examine the history of mankind, we shall see, that the Founders of empires and false religions, which these Artists contrived should support one another, were frank Enthusiasts: But, at the same time, sufficient masters of themselves, to turn, with proper address, that spirit which they had caught and communicated, to the advancement of their proper schemes. And it is observable, that wherever one of these personated actors was not perfect in both his parts, he was soon hissed off the stage. The reason is evident: it arises from the nature of things. Without Enthusiasm, the adventurer could never kindle that fire in his followers which is so necessary to consolidate their mutual interests: for no one can heartily deceive numbers, who is not first of all deceived himself; or, in other words, seen to be in earnest. But then, on the contrary, when the spirit of fanaticism is sufficiently spread and inflamed, it can never produce any great or notable issue, unless the raiser and director of the machine be so far master of himself as to be able to turn the point of this powerful instrument to the objects of his project, and keep it constantly directed to their advancement.

Indeed (as hath been observed above) the successful Directors of this Drama have generally exhibited more of art in their latter scenes, and more of enthusiasm in the former. The reason of which too is not less evident. Fanaticism is a kind of ebullition or critical ferment of the infected mind: which a vigorous nature can work through,

through, and by slow degrees be able to cast off. Hence, history informs us of several successful Impostors who set out in all the blaze of fanaticism, and ended their career in all the depth and stillness of Politics. A prodigy in our nature; but not the rarest; and exhibited with superior splendor by the famous Ignatius Loiola. This illustrious person, who verified the observation of one that almost equalled him in his trade, “that a man never rises so high as when he does not know whither he is going,” began his extasies in the mire; and yet ended with the direction and execution of Councils, that even in his own life-time began to give the Law to Christendom.

Amidst all these distractions of human reason and obliquities of worldly politics, we see a spiritual Empire suddenly arise; we mark its progress; we trace its extent; we examine its establishment; and comparing all its parts with their reference to a whole, we find it in effect to have, what was fancied of old Rome, every essential character of eternity. Yet was this surprizing Revolution brought about by means entirely different from those by which all the great changes and establishments amongst mankind have been introduced, I mean FRAUD and FANATICISM. What, then, are we to conclude, but that the Religion of Jesus is as divine in its origine as it is pure and perfect in its essence: and that its Author was as free from all the visions and obliquities of Enthusiasm as he was replete with all the wisdom and virtue of Heaven?

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S E R M O N VII.

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE  
MESSENGERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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MATT. V. 16.

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE  
YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS  
IN HEAVEN.

OUR Blessed Saviour, as we may collect from the foregoing chapter, had delivered to his Followers the great Principles of the Gospel Dispensation; which consist in a clearer knowledge of the true God; the lost and forfeited condition of man; and restoration to life and immortality by faith in the Messiah.

Having thus taught them what they were to believe, he proceeds in this, and the following chapter, to shew them what they were to practise; introducing his *Sermon on the Mount* with the words of my text, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* As much as to say, The use you are to make of your superior knowledge is to compleat and recommend your practice; that, from thence may arise, what is the legitimate end of all human actions, *Glory to God.*

This

This is the general sense of the words. But the equity, the importance, the necessity of the precept do well deserve a more particular illustration.

It consists of three distinct parts.

The first is contained in the more general direction of *Letting our Light shine before men*. By *light* is meant *knowledge*, or the participation of *truth*; and not, as it is commonly understood, *good works*. And this appears not only from what hath been just observed of the disposition of the precept, with regard to what precedes and follows it; but likewise from the propriety of the words themselves, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works*; for the thing seen, and the instrument of seeing, must needs be different. Not to speak of the propriety of the figure, in the word *light* for *knowledge*. For what light is to the eye, that knowledge is to the mind: On which account it is become a metaphor running through all languages, but hath a peculiar grace and energy in the application of my text: The Great Author of our faith being described by the inspired men of old under the same figure, *That there should come a STAR out of Jacob*: wherefore St. John gives him the title of the *LIGHT which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*.

By this *light's shining before men* is meant, that it should be diffusive to all, as the nature of light is in itself, which sends out its rays on every side around; and that it should be communicated to all, as light is in its use and application amongst men; for as Jesus says in the words preceding my text, *Neither do men light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick*.

But rightly to apprehend the reason of giving an express precept for the doing what appears so natural for his followers to do, and so reasonable that they should do, we must consider the state and condition of Truth at the publication of the Gospel; where we shall find that the societies of the wise and learned, in the schools of the philosophers and in the colleges of the priests (from whence issued the voluntary and appointed instructors of the world), had

imbibed, from one another, very inveterate prejudices concerning the communication of truth to the people.

In their sacred fraternities, partly to hide the weakness of the national religion, and partly to preserve the veneration for, and to increase the gain of the priesthood, every thing was wrapt about with mystery, and shut up within the cloisters of their temples. The books that contained the doctrine and discipline of religion were carefully sequestered from common eyes; and the inquisitive tempers of the vulgar restrained and checked by oracular denunciations against prophane curiosity.

The same incommunicable spirit prevailed in the schools of the Philosophers. These despised the people as much as the Priests imposed upon them; and shaking off their common relation to the gross body of mankind, they soon began to think, that the doctrines and speculations of their schools were of a nature too excellent to come into the markets and assemblies of the Vulgar. Hence their solemn engagements of secrecy; by which they kept their knowledge confined within the limits of their own sect or profession. Thus stood the *Pagan* world with respect to Truth.

Amongst the *Jews*, That great body called the Pharisees, which had all the learning and power of the Sanhedrim in their hands, had likewise, in imitation of the Gentile colleges of Religion and Learning, formed themselves into a Sect; and as they had borrowed many Pagan practices and opinions, which had miserably polluted the Law of Moses, so this, amongst the rest, of confining Wisdom to the walls of the Temple; and *taking away the key of knowledge from their brethren* \*.

Such being the perverse state of things, it was no wonder that Jesus should deem it of high importance to the interests of Truth, to caution his followers against a prejudice that had so universally infected all the teachers of Philosophy and Religion.

\* Luke xi. 52.

But there are still further reasons to enforce this precept : The Christian faith hath its advantages of *shining*, and the Teachers of it their obligations to *light it up*, which are no where else to be found amongst all the various systems of wisdom or holiness.

For, 1. The Religion of Jesus is fit for, and worthy the knowledge and examination of every man. The several modes of Pagan worship, as they composed the national religions, were contrived and framed by Lawgivers, in ways that best served the ends of their several societies ; so that public service, rather than truth, being the object of their institutions, these were but badly fitted for popular examination : which, therefore, in consequence, was forbid. But Jesus, who had no oblique ends to serve, *his kingdom not being of this world*, delivered only pure and exact truth, which will stand the severest test, and most critical inquiry : And This, which was so fit, was, at the same time, most necessary to be communicated to all, as propounding to mankind, *The terms of salvation* to be obtained only by *his Gospel*. Unlike, in this too, to the wisdom of the ancient Sages, which comprised only idle and fruitless truths, with which the people had no concern ; or abstract and obscure speculations, with which they had no acquaintance.

*Secondly*, The Teachers of this Religion had the highest obligations freely to communicate of their knowledge to others. The pretence, on which the ancient masters of wisdom justified themselves in a contrary practice, was the cost and labour they had been at in acquiring knowledge. A long and studious application to letters, in the painful probationary trials of their schools ; The many and dangerous voyages they had undertaken in search of wisdom, at their great expence of fortune, ease, and health : These gave them, as they thought, an exclusive property in the Truths which they had so dearly bought, and so often paid for. Whereas the followers of Jesus had all their divine wisdom brought home unto them, without cost or search. Hence it is that their Master elsewhere tells them, *Freely you have received ; freely give* \*. Tha :

\* Matt. x. 8.

is, You can have no pretence to conceal, or sell, the Knowledge, which was given to you without search or price.

II. But it was not enough for this *light to shine before men*; it was not enough for the followers of Jesus to communicate of their saving knowledge to others: it was So to shine, that the world might see and understand the virtues of its enlighteners. And this is the second particular of the precept. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.* And as before, the PROPERTY of light was alluded to, in the command that it *should shine*; so here, the USE, that it *should so shine*. For light is not held forth for the manifestation of itself; but to illustrate something else, which men would recommend to public notice.

It is here supposed, you see, that the DOCTRINES of Christianity will lend a *light to good works*, whereby they may be better seen and understood. And this with great reason. There are two ways of estimating moral actions; either by the merit of the Performer, or by the benefit of the Effects. If by the benefit of their effects, there is no need of knowing the motive of the actor; on which all merit must be estimated. In such case, we only praise the action for the good it produceth: or if the actor have any share in the applause; as his motives may, for aught we know, be only prepossession, habit, or gentleness of temper; it is but just such commendation as we give to animals undegenerate, and displaying the good qualities of their respective species. But when we would estimate *good works* by the merit of the Performer, which is the case in question, we are then to know his motives of action. These arise out of his principles; and are more or less noble as those principles are more or less legitimate. Now as the principles, or *light*, of true religion produce the noblest motives for *good works*, which are love of God and universal benevolence towards man; with great reason does the holy Jesus suppose, that this *light* will add the highest lustre to CHRISTIAN MORALS; and make them, as he well expresses it, *seen*; that is, seen in their full light and splendor.

By

By this branch of the precept, again, it was our Master's purpose to discriminate his followers from the Pagan priesthood; who neither practised virtue themselves, nor taught it as of much avail to the people. If they were but frequent in their temple service, and exact in their ritual solemnities, these false guides assured them that the Gods were pleased, and they had done their duty.

It was much the same with the Jewish. The love of God and of their neighbour was forgotten, or *made of none effect*, as our Lord tells them, *through their traditions* \*; and nothing found to supply their place, but *new Moons and Sabbaths, fasts and solemn assemblies* †; which had so thoroughly usurped the place of Virtue, as, in time, even to dispute the very name with it.

III. But we have not yet the full sense of my text. It was not enough that the *light* of Jesus's followers *shone before men*, and that their *good works* were *seen* by it: They were to be *such good works* as from whence *glory to God* might result. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* And this is the third and last particular of the precept.

It would be the highest folly and arrogance, in the reptile, man, to imagine that he, by any of his endeavours, could add to the *glory of God*, with whom essentially dwells all power and perfection for evermore. But though the pomp of ceremonies, the servility of prostrations, the cost of sacrifices, and the dedication of sumptuous temples, can add nothing to his *glory*; yet is he graciously pleased, so long as we continue subject to his Son, and obedient to his laws, to reckon our procuring and advancing our own mutual happiness, by the exercise of *good works*, as the augmentation of his proper *glory*.

But it is not only in the *end*, but in the *means*, of procuring human happiness, that our holy religion hath advantages peculiar to itself, for the promotion of *God's glory*. We are taught by this

\* Mark vii. 13.

† Isaiah i. 13.

religion, that, of ourselves, and without the assistance of Heaven, we can do *no good work*, for that it is the Holy Spirit who directs us *both to will and to do of his own good pleasure* \*. God therefore being the immediate giver of this *grace*, all that proceeds from it must be placed to his account, and to the augmentation of his *glory*.

Here again will the followers of Jesus be distinguished from all other teachers. The Pagan and Jewish priesthood were, indeed, by their very profession, taught, that the *glory* of the Deity was to be their aim. For religion being their employment, and the object of religion, God; they could not but see that his *glory* was principally to be regarded. But in the way of doing it they were both equally mistaken. They placed this *glory*, as we observed before, only in the magnificence of their temples, the train of their processions, the awfulness of sacrifice, and the humiliation of expiatory penances. They never suspected that *peace, good-will towards men*, advanced *glory to God in the highest*.

The Philosophers were still more in the dark as to this matter. For though, in one point, they saw clearer than the priests, that Virtue was infinitely preferable to the pomp of solemnest sacrifice; yet, in cultivating the duties of morality, they were so far from thinking of the *glory of God*, that they refined and sublimated VIRTUE for no other purpose than to advance the *glory of man*. Nor could it well be otherwise amongst men, who were ignorant both of the true ground of moral obligation, and of our natural inability to act upon it: from which two principles, rightly derived, *glory to God* most eminently results. For, first, their motives to the practice of virtue were absurd and illegitimate. One followed it *for the love of fame and reputation*; another, *for the intrinsic beauty of its nature*; a third, *for the benefit of its effects*; a fourth, *for that the laws of his country required it*; a fifth, *for he knew not why*: But none practised it on its true principle, *conformity*

\* Philip. ii. 13.

to the will of God: from whence *glory* to him naturally proceeds. Again. They were as much mistaken in man's ability. They pretended that their SAGE had the whole exercise of virtue in his power, by the mere force and rectitude of his own nature, without any aid or assistance from the Deity. Nay, the *Stoics*, a sect which, of all others, most cultivated the science and practice of morality, were so far from seeking the assistance of Heaven, that, with an unparalleled extravagance, they placed their WISE MAN in a rank superior to their GODS, as having in him something of higher strength and fortitude; for that he persevered in virtue, amidst a thousand difficulties and discouragements; whereas the virtue of the Gods had no temptations to shake it \*. In a word, such utter strangers were they, in general, both to the nature of God and Man, that Cicero, delivering the sentiments of ancient wisdom on this matter, expresses himself to this effect: "All the commodities of life, says he, are the gift of Heaven, but virtue no man ever yet thought came from God. For, who ever returned him thanks, that he was good and honest? And why should he? for virtue is, of right, our own praise, and that in which man reasonably GLORIES. This, in short, is the opinion of all the world, that the goods of fortune are to be asked of Heaven, but that wisdom is to be had only from ourselves †."

\* Est aliquid, quo SAPIENS antecedit Deum. Ille naturæ beneficio, non suo sapiens est. Sen. Ep. liii.—Ferte fortiter, hoc est quo Deum anteceditis. Ille extra patientiam malorum est, vos [Sapientes] supra patientiam. Idem Lih Quare bonis, etc.

† The whole passage is in these words: Atque hoc quidem omnes mortales sic habent, externas commoditates, vineta, segetes, oliveta, ubertatem frugum et fructuum, omnem denique commoditatem prosperitatemque vitæ, à Diis se habere: virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit. Nimirum rectè. Propter virtutem enim jure laudamus, et IN VIRTUTE RECTE GLORIAMUR. Quod NON contingeret, si id DONUM A DEO, non à nobis haberemus. At verò aut honoribus aucti, aut re familiari, aut si aliud quippiam nacti sumus fortuiti boni, aut depulimus mali, cum Diis gratias agimus, tum nihil nostræ laudi assumtum arbitramur. Num quis, quòd bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quòd dives, quòd honoratus, quòd incolumis—Ad rem autem ut redeam, judicium hoc omnium mortalium est, fortunam à Deo petendam, à SEIPSO sumendam esse SAPIENTIAM. De Nat. Deor. l. iii. c. 36.

But now it will be said, and it is not an objection to be concealed, How is this precept to the Disciple, to be accommodated to the Master's practice? Jesus directs the Messengers of his word to *let their light shine before men*: and yet his own was so obscurely dispensed, that his followers are ever and anon soliciting him to explain his meaning. And his answer to them, upon one of these occasions, only increases the embarrass. *Unto you (says he) it is given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, but, unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their Sins should be forgiven them* \*. A penurious dispensation of truth is the least offensive circumstance in this dreadful account of his commission. The keeping numbers in darkness, in order to work their destruction, gives but an untoward idea of a divine Messenger; and a much worse of him in particular who, by his own declaration, was sent *not to destroy men's lives but to save them* †, or, as he expresses it on an occasion more to our present purpose, *to save that which was lost* ‡.

I shall examine this offensive circumstance in the Gospel dispensation, not merely to shew the conformity between Jesus's own practice, and that which in my text he recommends to his followers; but principally to vindicate the justice of the divine conduct towards those, who, it is confessed, were the proper objects of his vengeance. And the rather, as this circumstance is become a stumbling-block which licentious men are ever ready to throw in the way of the staggering and the weak-sighted.

In order to do this, we must go back to the institution of the Law. This establishment, though preparatory to the Gospel, was yet, in order to fit it to the genius of the Jewish people, delivered under a carnal cover; which, for the sake of *what was to come*,

\* Mark iv. 11, 12.

† Luke ix. 56.

‡ Matt. xviii. 11.

the Prophets, from time to time, were ever lifting up; and pointing to the spiritual substance beneath. Notwithstanding this attention of providence to conduct them to their true happiness, the genius of the people prevailed; and instead of suffering the SUBJECT disclosed by the prophets to erect their minds to heavenly things, They caught at the EXPRESSION to fortify themselves in their carnal habitudes. In a word, The Jews growing more and more earthly-minded; and with an obstinacy so peculiar to them, that their blindness seemed to spread in proportion to their increase of day-light; By such time as the change of the œconomy approached, any cover for truth, even the plainest apologue, or most obvious parable, was sufficient to keep them in that ignorance, into which their passions and prejudices had brought them.

Against this hardness of heart and grossness of understanding, the prophets had long struggled, by all the address of information, by all severity of reproof; till at length, every mean of reformation having proved ineffectual, God, in his wise providence, thought fit, that those who would not suffer him to save them should, for a warning to an impious world, have their rejection of the Lord of life predicted by the mouth of his Prophets; and their final destruction recorded in their own Oracles.

The time foretold was now come. The Lord of life was sent to THEM and to all MANKIND. And agreeable to his business, was his Office and Character. To mankind at large he was primarily a divine Messenger: To the Jews, a divine Messenger foretold. To prove his mission, he worked miracles: to prove himself the Messiah, he fulfilled Prophecies. Under the first part of his Character, *his light shone before men* in the manner he recommends it to his followers' imitation: under the latter, it *shone* indeed, but so as to be subservient and instrumental to the evidence arising from the marks predicted of their promised Deliverer. Now God, by Isaiah, had said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord  
" saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then  
" said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go and tell this

“ people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed \*.” From this prophecy, (which the Disciples might have seen was then fulfilling on the Jews †, in the very mode of communicating the Gospel to them) our blessed Saviour deduceth the proof of his Messiah-Character—*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand ‡.* As much as to say, Take this mark amongst others of the truth of my pretensions : My offers of Salvation, as was foretold, are rejected of my Countrymen ; and I have delivered my message to them in such terms, and attended with such circumstances, as the good providence of God hath foretold ; and by foretelling, hath prescribed the Messiah to employ, in order to promote the accomplishment of his will. So that Jesus, we see, is not here declaring the MODE, in which, as a divine messenger, he was to propound God's good will to man : Much less is it any intimation of the peculiar GENIUS of the Gospel ; which in one place selected it's favourites, and in another doomed the unhappy to perdition : But it is a simple assertion that the prophetic prediction, or, if you will, God's sentence, was now fulfilling or executing on the Jews : And that Jesus, as the instrument of it's completion, was indeed the Messiah foretold. In a word, he is here simply instructing his followers in the wise and wonderful accomplishment of Scripture prophecy, concerning the fate of the Jews and the fortunes of their Messiah ; to convince them of God's righteous dealings, and of the truth of his own mission. Let what consequence soever therefore, concerning the divine justice, be drawn from this declaration, it concerns not Jesus, as preacher of the Gospel ; but God himself as the giver of the Law.

\* Isaiah vi. 8, 9, 10.

† Matth. xiii. 14. John xii. 39.

‡ Luke viii. 10.

We address ourselves then, with due reverence, to justify his ways to man ; which we trust may be done without presumption or difficulty, where Revelation informs us of the act ; and Natural light instructs us in the equity and reason of it.—“ Also I heard the  
“ voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go  
“ for us ? Then said I, Hear am I, send me. And he said, Go  
“ and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and  
“ see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people  
“ fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they  
“ see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand  
“ with their heart, and convert and be healed.”

Here, we see, the event predicted, is the rejection of the Messiah : and though we find it so predicted as may seem to imply it was likewise influenced, *lest they see with their eyes*, yet as we are able to give a good account why such terms might be used though no such influence were exerted, it does not follow that the event was indeed influenced.

First then, we may observe, that, had it been the intent of the holy Spirit to impress upon the hearer no more than the CERTAINTY of the event, we cannot conceive how this idea could have been conveyed more naturally and elegantly than by words which imply an INFLUENCE, *make the heart of this people fat, &c.* For the human mind being unable to reconcile free-will and prescience, it can hardly be brought to consider a future event as any other than a contingency, till the idea of a superior influence be taken in.

Secondly, where the matter revealed concerns God’s MORAL GOVERNMENT, the subject seems to require, that the natural effects of vice should be represented as positive inflictions, as judicial punishment for crimes. Philosophically speaking, A hardness of heart, in the course of things, brought on this fatal blindness : But, prophetically, The blindness is a Punishment for their hardness of heart ; *to them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, etc.*

The

The subject, I say, seems to require this representation; men being but too apt to consider the natural issue of things, as out of the bounds of moral government; though in reality it make a very essential part: for what such men call the **ETERNAL RELATIONS** are indeed no other than a **DISPOSITION**, of God's free appointment; and therefore whatever evil results from such disposition, may in a moral sense be truly and properly considered as a positive infliction.

And I am the rather inclined to believe that the prophecy in question is to be understood in this sense, when I consider the conduct both of Jesus and his apostles to this abandoned people. The first offer of the Gospel is made to them: and it is not till their rejection of it, that Jesus turns to the Gentiles. He took care that his followers should observe the same conduct. And no reasonable account, I think, but this, can be given of his suffering them to remain so long under the delusion of that gross prejudice, that the offer and benefits of the Gospel were confined to the race of Abraham. For the consequence of this was their being strongly driven to try all methods with a people to whom their commission was supposed both to begin and end. They were so driven; and did not leave Judea till forced away by persecution: and then, the same prejudice turned them, first of all, to the *dispersed amongst the Gentiles* \*.

But let us now suppose this predicted blindness to be, what the objectors would have it, a positive infliction of evil. If ever there were punishments in mercy, this was certainly one of them. We see from their whole history, how morally impossible it was that they should be converted by any mere conviction. All their faculties were so totally possessed with ideas of a temporal deliverance, that they would have rejected a spiritual dominion even from the hand of God himself: as they had before rejected a glorious Theocracy under his own ineffable administration, for the sake of a

\* John vii. 35.

fashionable Tyranny, like what their neighbours groaned under. Now, in so desperate a condition, the increase of light must have been the increase of condemnation. The greatest mercy therefore that could have been afforded them was to *make their heart fat, their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes.*

But he who will insist that the words, which follow—*lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed*—do necessarily imply a punishment in judgment, rather than in mercy, shall not be contended with by me : so little reason do I think we have to stand out, from the apprehension of its impinging on the moral attributes of God. Be it then a punishment in judgment.

To suppose no such for long slighted grace, is making the highest benefit the cheapest and the vilest : and if we suppose any, the most adequate seems to be the loss of that which had been long, and impiously abused.

To believe offered salvation to be always at hand, after much scornful rejection of it, is to divest God of his justice ; and to leave him nothing to exercise over man but his mercy. But whenever the conclusions, which we draw concerning God's dispensations towards us, from one of his attributes, are made at the expence of another, we may be assured that they are false because unreasonable.

Further, Every covenant of God with man, on the system of God's revealed will, is a covenant of grace or favour ; Which therefore may be justly made (as in fact it is made) with this conditional punishment annexed and declared. And what fitter, in the nature of things, than that long and continued insults on the Giver should be punished by a total deprivation of the gift ?

But lastly, this part of the great Dispensation seems, in some cases, to be necessary for the support and dignity of God's moral government. If God had nothing to do but to pardon, man would soon find nothing to do but to offend.

The

The two great sources of human infelicity are **PRESUMPTION** and **PREJUDICES** ; and these we are apt to indulge in all the objects of our **WILL** and **JUDGMENT** : the consequence of which is, our so frequent miscarriages in the pursuits both of **HAPPINESS** and **KNOWLEDGE**.

One of the boldest instances of presumption is our so commonly neglecting the *calls of grace* : so that nothing less than this awful part of God's dispensation, the *shutting the door* on those who have long and vilely trifled with it, was sufficient to give a check to so impious a folly.

The impatience of labour, and the violence and allurements of the appetites, are the source of all our prejudices and wrong judgments : and while we continue to be misled by that master prejudice, the **INNOCENCE OF ERROR**, there is little reason to expect we should be disposed to bring our opinions to a strict account. But this awakening truth, of the punishment for abused mercy in taking away the means of information, will dispose us to give Religion as early and fair hearing ; and make us sensible that Error is never innocent while the door of Truth stands open before us.

But the best proof of God's righteous dealing are the **THINGS DONE** : and it is only for want of full demonstration here, that we are forced to have recourse to any other : It being but to supply and support the lower degrees of evidence in the history of God's dispensation, that we reason upon the justice of them from the nature of things. In all cases where we have sensible demonstration of the fact, the reasoning, as is fit, goes the other way ; and the justice of doing is proved from the thing done. Whether God could cast off his chosen nation, and keep or leave them in irremediable blindness, is to be proved, where the rejection rests only on moral evidence, from what we know of his nature and attributes. But where this punishment, whose commencement rests only on such evidence, is still executing before our eyes, in this case, the sensible demonstration of the fact is a better proof of the justice of it, than all that metaphysic reasoning can supply.

This

This we presume to be the real case of the Jewish people. Whenever this dreadful judgment of God, which fell upon them in a national destruction, had its beginning; whether at, or before their refusal of salvation from the Lord of life; so much at least is certain, that it still continues to operate with unremitted vigour. For, as in civil tribunals, which are wont, in the case of more atrocious criminals whose death but half satisfies the demands of justice, to doom the lifeless carcase to be gibetted up in terror, and exposed to the sight of the survivors, so it hath pleased eternal Justice to act, in its disposition of the remains of this unhappy nation. For though their civil and religious policies have been long overthrown and abolished, yet the Name survives, and the Race still exists, as distinct and separate, and perhaps more unmixed than while they were a Nation. A dreadful distinction, and supported against a thousand circumstances which must, according to all our rules and experience of human affairs, have long since swallowed and absorbed them into the great and undistinguishable mass of mankind. The circumstances, I mean, are such as arise from their dispersion over the whole earth, without proper habitation, country, or national connexion. For a fixed abode, as the head-quarters of a powerless people, seems to be a kind of preservative against extinction; and as we are told (by those who would willingly lessen the miracle of this punishment) hath actually kept in being, the *Guebres* and the *Parfis* in some retired corners of India. And yet the TEN TRIBES, when doomed to the like destruction, found a fixed habitation; who nevertheless are absorbed and lost as if they had never been. Now, though the philosopher and politician will but badly account for this; The religionist can resolve it with ease. He says, that God Almighty had decreed and foretold that the first dispersion should absorb the name and memory of the people punished; and that the last should preserve and hold them up, the visible objects of his present vengeance, and of his future mercy.

But then, how are they held up? As the refuse of the earth, the outcast of nations, and the opprobrium of humanity; equally

hated and detested by all the differing religions and various policies of mankind. For, in order to convey down the justice of the sentence, along with the execution, (so wonderful are the ways of God) the *vices* of this abandoned people continues to this day, as inseparable from their persons, as the punishment, it produced upon their race. And avarice, fraud, and a savage inhumanity, like an incurable leprosy, as effectually distinguish their obduracy from the shifting follies of mankind, as does the adherence to their rabbinical superstitions.

To resume then, and to conclude with the main question, which led us into this inquiry, The consistency between the openness and evidence recommended by Jesus to his followers; and the parables and dark speeches delivered by himself.

We presume, it now appears, that there is a perfect harmony and agreement between the precept and the example: that the first is declarative of the essential genius of the Gospel; the second only an occasional appeal to the evidence of Jesus's Messiah-character: and consequently, which is the inference to be drawn from both, that throughout the course of Christ's ministry, every thing, as well what was kept back from some, as what was clearly and fully revealed to others, equally tended to the advancement of God's *GLORY*, and the *GOOD* of mankind.

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# S E R M O N      V I I I .

## THE EDIFICATION OF GOSPEL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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2 P E T E R, Chap. i.

5. GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH, VIRTUE;  
AND TO VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE;
6. AND TO KNOWLEDGE, TEMPERANCE; AND TO TEMPERANCE,  
PATIENCE; AND TO PATIENCE, GODLINESS;
7. AND TO GODLINESS, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS; AND TO BRO-  
THERLY-KINDNESS, CHARITY.

**T**HE holy Apostle beginning his farewell epistle to the Churches with a commendation of their FAITH, takes occasion from thence to instruct them in the nature of that CHRISTIAN EDIFICATION which they were to raise on it; and, as his last *labour of love*, brings together, and lays in, all the various materials proper for so great a work.

\* N. B. This Discourse was printed and published while the Rebel Army was in England, in the latter end of the year 1745.

But we shall have a very wrong, and much too low, conception of our Apostle's skill, if we consider these but as materials rudely thrown together without art or choice; and standing in need of other hands to range them in that architectonic order wherein they are to be employed. For on a careful survey of his plan it will be found, that no other than that Spirit which directed the workmen of the old tabernacle could give so artful a disposition to the materials of this new *building not made with hands, whose builder and maker is God* \*.

He hath marked out the Foundation, he hath fixed the Basis, proportioned the Members, adorned the Superstructure, and crowned the Whole with the richest of materials. And all this with such justice of science, sublimity of thought, and force of genius, that every foregoing Virtue gives STABILITY to the following; and every following imparts PERFECTION to that which went before: Where the three Orders of this heavenly architecture, the HUMAN, the DIVINE, and SOCIAL Virtues, are so masterly disposed, that the *human* and *social* have their proper strengths and graces heightened and supported by the common connection of the *divine*: Where every thing, in short, concurs, in its proper station, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ* †.

In conformity to the Masters of Science, who deliver it to their disciples as a first principle, that no considerable advancement is to be expected without much pains and labour, our holy artist introduceth his rules with this preliminary precept,—GIVING ALL DILIGENCE. And if this be necessary in civil matters, where nothing opposeth the progress to perfection but *the length of art and shortness of life*; with how great reason are we here enjoined *diligence*, where, besides those discouragements, we have numerous enemies within us under the disguise of friends, the confederated Passions, to retard our progress; and devils, and evil men without, to stop us as we press forward in the career of virtue?

\* 2 Cor. v. 1. Heb. xi. 10.

† Eph. iv. 12.

But

But the necessity of this *diligence* will be fully seen in the sequel of our discourse; where we explain the care and circumspection required in the cultivation of every Christian Virtue, here recommended, to prevent its languishing by defect, or luxuriating by excess.

St. PETER, *as a wise master-builder* \*, chuseth for his foundation that ROCK on which our Lord had promised him to *build the Church*;

*Add to your FAITH—*

as directed by the same divine Spirit with his fellow-labourer St. PAUL, who bids *every man take heed how he buildeth*; for *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST* †.

But the simplicity and clearness of the doctrine of *Faith* could not secure it, even in the apostolic times, from being perverted to countenance the most fatal error concerning its nature and efficacy; while it was mistaken to be *alone* sufficient to make man acceptable to his Maker, and, *without good works*, to entitle him to the rewards of the Gospel-covenant. To explain the original causes of this error, and to shew how the perfect novelty of the doctrine of Faith—the illustrious marks of that Spirit, which then accompanied the profession of the Faith—and the method the Holy Spirit directed the Apostles to pursue in the propagation of the Gospel—to shew, I say, how all these accidentally contributed to support this error, is beside the bounds and purpose of the present discourse.

It shall suffice to observe, that this dangerous extravagance, which hath continued more or less, to infect all ages of the Christian Church, spread immediately so swift and wide, upon the wings of that divine truth, that a *man is justified by Faith without the deeds of the law* ‡, that the apostolic writers found it necessary to give it a frequent and formal confutation. And on this account, St. Peter's first precept enjoins us to add or build *Virtue* upon *Faith*.

\* 1 Cor. iii. 10.

† Id. ib. 11.

‡ Rom. iii. 28.

*Add to your Faith, VIRTUE\*.*

From henceforth, *Faith*, which, while it was single and solitary, remained *dead*, as the sacred writers express it, being thus *cloathed upon* by virtue, becomes alive and vigorous, and productive of all the fruits of grace and immortality.

A reciprocal advantage *Virtue*, thus erected, receives from *Faith*: for we shall find these advantages to be, all the way, reciprocal. The weakness of unguided Reason, and the violence of ill-balanced passions, had reduced MORAL VIRTUE, both in principle and practice, to so shadowy and precarious an existence, that the Wisest in the Pagan world could not forbear lamenting its helpless condition; and owning that nothing but a Revelation from Heaven could realize and support it.

They mistook the true foundation of Morality; Some placing it in the native excellence of virtue, others in the exterior benefits, of which it is productive. They were left destitute, and exposed to the free rage of ungoverned passions, without aid, and with uncertain prospect of reward.

But it was the *Dispensation of Faith*, which taught us that the true foundation of Morality was compliance to the will of our Creator and sovereign Lord. It was *Faith* which enabled us to surmount all the opposition of the appetites, by holding out to us an infinite reward; and which the assistance of the holy Spirit hath placed within our reach. Thus, to use the words of the apostle Jude, *building up ourselves on our most holy FAITH, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping ourselves in the love of God, we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* †.

\* I understand the word ἀρετή, in this place, in its common acceptation as it is used by moral writers. But Grotius says, Vox ἀρετῆς non potest hic ita generaliter sumi ut Phil. iv. 8. & apud Philosophos. It is fit we hear his reason, that the reader may judge between us. Sequuntur enim multa virtutum nomina, quare ἀρετή hic recte puto posse accipi fortitudinem in fide. He owns—Est in hoc periodo egregia gradatio. I think I have shewn there is such a gradation; but its beauty and correctness depend on ἀρετῆς's being taken *generaliter*, ut Phil. iv. 8. & apud Philosophos.

† Ver. 20, 21.

But

But though *Virtue* be here enjoined, and in all the preaching of our blessed Saviour, and in all the writings of his Apostles, incessantly repeated and enforced; yet if we expect to find in them any regular or methodic body of Morality, we shall be much mistaken. With respect to this, the New Testament, all along, refers us to another Guide. For God having before revealed the whole doctrine of Morality by the RELIGION OF NATURE, and none of God's dispensations contradicting another, it was enough for the first teachers of Christianity, when they preached up *Virtue*, to refer their followers for particulars, to what Natural Religion taught concerning it.

This being so, and that the great Pandect of the LAW OF NATURE is to be searched and studied, in order to attain a perfect knowledge of moral duty, there is need of much pains and exercise of mind to learn that *Virtue* we are here enjoined to build upon *Faith*. For though Nature hath stamped so strongly the first principles of moral duty in the breasts of all men, that even a kind of friendly instinct will not suffer us to be totally ignorant of them; yet the numerous deductions from those first principles, of what is fit and right, in every circumstance of life, being to be collected by the setting together, comparing, and sorting our ideas, through all the various combinations of moral complexities, it requires, even with the assistance of Holy Writ, much reflection and habitude; and without that assistance, is a task utterly unsurmountable, as the experience of all ages hath fully shewn.

Scripture then constantly referring to the Law of Nature, what can result from the study of Scripture, by one ignorant of that Law, but doubt and uncertainty, if modest; and if vain and presuming, and at the same time (which hath too often happened) a teacher of others by profession, what but mistakes and errors, the fatal errors of Superstition and Fanaticism? For doubtless to an ignorance of natural Religion must be ascribed those extravagances to which so many Sects and Parties have, in their several turns, been obnoxious.

But

But much of this mischief had been avoided, had men duly attended to the words of our Apostle: who, with this design, gave us the next precept of my text. *Add*, says he,

*to Virtue, KNOWLEDGE;*

or that wisdom which is the result of the study of Nature in the pursuit of Truth.

## I.

And that you may see with how prophetic, as well as just, a spirit St. *Peter* was here directed, I shall stop a moment to hold you out a picture of *Virtue* unattended with that *Knowledge*; copied from no obscure or disgraced originals; but from such whose lives are preached up for examples, and their deaths commemorated with divine honours; such as have shrines and altars dedicated to their worship; and vows and petitions offered up to their divinity; in one word, **POPISH SAINTS**.

To understand this matter truly, We must consider, that *Virtue* consists in acting agreeably to those relations, in which we stand to our common Humanity, our Fellow-creatures, and our Creator. For as **RELIGION**, in the largest sense of the word, includes the duty we owe ourself and neighbour; so **MORALITY**, in its larger sense, includes the observance of that relation we stand in towards God. And when the practice respects man, it is called **VIRTUE**; when it respects God, it is **PIETY**.

These relations are commonly distinguished into the *human*, the *social*, and the *divine* virtues: The end and design of all which is to perfect man's nature;

1. By restraining, regulating, and directing, the private and selfish appetites, *according to the dictates of reason*.

2. By cultivating, improving, and enlarging the social passions and affections, and employing them in the service of our Species, *according to the dictates of charity*.

3. By

3. By exercising our understandings in the contemplation of the first Cause, and by owning our relation to him in suitable acts of rational worship, in order to unite us to our supreme Good, *according to the dictates of grace.*

Now when, in the Church of Rome, *Knowledge* came to be esteemed of no use to improve or direct *Virtue*; but that *Ignorance* was thought as well the mother of all other virtues, as of *Devotion*: When the *Law of Nature* came to be shunned as a dangerous and fallacious guide; and *Faith*, traditional, not scriptural, had usurped its province of interpreting *Gospel-righteousness*; then it was, that these bright examples of a new kind of virtue appeared amongst them, in a barbarous rabble of Saints; who under the common name of RELIGIOUS, and on pretence of a more sublime and elevated virtue, than natural Religion taught, ran into the most horrid excesses of Fanaticism and Superstition. For,

1. Instead of REGULATING the selfish appetites, they laboured all they could to eradicate and destroy them, as things, even in their nature, vicious; as the graceless furniture of *the old man with his affections and lusts*. All was dismal and dark about them: inordinate watchings, excruciating disciplines, attenuating labours: these miseries, still further aggravated by hunger, thirst, and nakedness, were the best means these poor mistaken followers of *him*, who said *his yoke was easy and his burthen light*, could think of to regulate the selfish passions. Till the body, deprived of every kind of good, which the gracious hand of Providence hath so largely poured out for the solace of its creatures, gave way, and yielded to the fury of this fanatic penitence: While he was esteemed the greatest *Saint* who was the most expeditious *Suicide*.

2. Instead of improving and ENLARGING the social affections, these Saints fled into caves and deserts, or shut themselves up for life in the dust and silence of a cloister. Where, to unfit themselves for serving their friends and families, they renounced their possessions, to give to *pious uses*; that is, to support the sloth of lazy Mendicants, or the luxury of debauched Churchmen: To unfit

themselves for submission to the Civil magistrate, they entered into treasonable engagements of unlimited obedience to their spiritual superiors : To unfit themselves for serving their country or mankind, they took vows of voluntary poverty, and renounced all secular employments : And lastly, as much as in them lay, to make war against their very Species, they unnaturally devoted themselves to a single life, in blasphemous opposition to that first great command and blessing, *increase and multiply*.

3. Lastly, instead of USING REASON in the offices of devotion, to attain the supreme Good, an union with the Deity ; By crediting the *Imagination*, they have often thrown themselves, with extatic transports, into the arms of the Demon. While, in the place of internal acts of sober meditation, nothing was seen but visionary raptures, and transfigurations ; nothing heard but predictions, prophecies, and revelations : In the place of external acts of rational worship, they celebrated the holy offices with gay and childish ornaments, with barbarous and superstitious rites, and with base and servile prostrations. And the favourite objects of their worship were in all respects agreeable to the form ; either the idolatrous adoration of a consecrated wafer, or of those yet less substantial divinities, which have their existence only in a lying legend.

You have here a faithful picture of Popish *Virtue* stript of *Knowledge*. From whence you may collect how miserable a creature man grows, when he throws aside his *Reason*, the first kind gift of Heaven, in order to follow the false lights, which custom, fancy, or the passions, have stuck up in his breast ; and how equally miserable that Society must be, which supports a Religion, where IGNORANCE hath divested *Virtue* of all its charms, poisoned all its health, and made it as destructive to Communities, as barefaced open vice.

Here, you have been shewn, in a terrible example, the mischief done by *Ignorance* to *Virtue* ; of how much service *Knowledge* is to it, you may collect for yourselves.

I now

I now proceed to shew the reciprocal service *Virtue* does to *Knowledge*. *Knowledge* is the perception and attainment of TRUTH; and *useful Knowledge* the perception and attainment of those truths, which tend to the perfecting of our nature. But the carnal passions, operating averſely to ſuch truths, cloud and darken the underſtanding, ſo as to miſlead us even in thoſe of the moſt eaſy diſcovery, and of the higheſt importance. Again, to acquire a competent ſhare of *Knowledge* we muſt, as I have ſaid, *give all diligence* in the purſuit of truth, ſo as to trace her throughout her hidden reſſes: But it is only a love for the object, which can heartily engage us in the purſuit: And this can ariſe from nothing but the beauty of it. Now while *Vice* uſurps the heart, *Truth*, her mortal enemy, will be a neglected Guest. But when *Virtue* has aſſumed her ſeat, the paſſion for Truth will revive. For *Truth* and *Virtue* are twin-born ſiſters; and, with only a name of diſtinction, participate of one common nature; *Truth* being ſpeculative *Virtue*, and *Virtue* only practical *Truth*. And now the underſtanding makes a free progreſs in knowledge, as having no headſtrong appetites to miſlead it, nor earthly paſſions to damp its affection.

From henceforth, the only danger is from the quarter oppoſite: Left the mind's ardent love of truth ſhould engage it in abſtractions; and carry it beyond the limits of thoſe truths, which are given us for our contemplation here.

In order to apprehend this danger, we are to underſtand, that, of the imenſe intellectual ſyſtem, an extremely ſmall portion only lies really within our reach; the infinitely larger part reſiding near the ſource of Light itſelf; whoſe effulgence becomes darkneſs to the dazzled view of the impotent Intruder.

The reaſon why ſo much is kept out of ſight, and ſet above the reach of man's comprehension, who by the unwearied vigour of his faculties ſeems naturally capable of a much wider graſp, appears to be this, Left, in our earthly condition, the mind ſhould become diſtracted by too great variety of ideas; or that it ſhould make a wrong choice; and purſue truths of leſs preſent importance too far,

to the neglect of those more necessary for its improvement, in this our probationary condition.

This reason is much supported by observing, that in the enlightened part of the intellectual world, nay even in those clearest and brightest portions of it, where full science is to be had, speculations, pushed beyond a certain point (that point where Use is reasonably supposed to end, and mere Curiosity to begin) bring our conclusions to obscurity, extravagance, and contradiction.

The not attending to this seems to have been the very thing, which hath given birth, and so long continuance, to SCEPTICISM. For men seeing this to be the issue of the clearest principles, when pursued to an intemperate length, concluded, against their senses, that what ended in darkness had never really begun in light. Reason indeed convinced them that so perverse a progress was not the NATURAL CONDITION of things; but they would not suffer experience to teach them, that it was the ARBITRARY DECREE of infinite wisdom and mercy, which imposed this barrier to the extravagances of its giddy, lawless creature.

But however this may be, certain it is, that men, raised and heated by an over-fond passion for knowledge, have been always apt to run into the boundless regions of chimera's. Where, though lost and bewildered, yet, if of warm imaginations, and inflamed with the ambition of Inventors, they have taken more delight in those obscure and shadowy paths, than any sober follower of truth, within the limits of open day and nature.

Now these follies, so taking in themselves, and so mischievous in their consequences, proceeding from a want of modesty, and due consciousness of the narrow limits of the human understanding, St. Peter, in his next precept, with admirable skill, restrains. *Add*, says he,

*to Knowledge, TEMPERANCE* \*;

that

\* *Εὐμετρία* signifies moderation, or a temperate use of things in general. To denote the species, the Ancients said, *ἐνμετρίως ἀφροδισιῶν—γαστρὶς ἐνμετρίως—ἐνμετρίως ὕπνῳ, θυμῷ, οἷνῳ.*  
When

that is, *sobriety, moderation, continence*, in the pursuit of truth. For as *Virtue*, without *Knowledge*, falls into all kind of **FANATICISM** in practice; so *Knowledge*, without *Temperance*, leads to all kind of **HERESY** in opinion. St. Paul observed, even in his time, the seeds of *intemperate knowledge* begin to spring up and spread amongst his converts; and therefore cautions them against *vain philosophy and a knowledge that puffeth up* \*. But this so deformed and laid waste the Christian Church in after-times, that the *new earth* seemed, for many ages, to be under a *second curse of bringing forth nothing but thorns and thistles*; so much more severe than the *first*, that these delicacies were not to be produced without much labour, and *sweat of the brow*.

## II.

Here again the **ROMAN CHURCH** affords us a sad example of the mischiefs of *intemperate knowledge*: For though, as was observed before, there was great scarcity of *true knowledge* to direct their *Virtue*, they abounded in *false knowledge* to corrupt their *Faith*: Though they refused to make the **RELIGION OF NATURE** the interpreter of *Gospel-righteousness*, they sanctified the **VAIN PHILOSOPHY OF THE GREEKS** † to explain *justifying Faith*.

We have seen what sort of **SAINTS** the Church of Rome adores: Let us now see what kind of **DOCTORS** she builds her faith upon. As their **DEVOUT** retired to their Cloisters to deform *Virtue*, so their **LEARNED** assembled in their Schools to corrupt *Faith*. Where, mistaking Theology, which is a science

When the species is not thus designed, we have no way of determining the sense of so generical a word, but the context. Cic. uses *temperantia* in the sense *ἐνυπόκρισις* is here explained.—Qui autem, si maxime hoc placeat, *moderatius* tamen id volunt fieri, difficile quendam **TEMPERANTIAM** postulant in eo, quod semel admissum coerceri reprimique non potest: ut propemodum iustioribus utamur illis, qui omnino avocent a Philosophiâ quam iis qui rebus infinitis *modum* constituent: in reque eo meliore quo major sit, *mediocritatem* desiderant—tamen nec *modus* est ullus *investigandi veri*.—De Fin. l. i, c. 1.

\* Col. ii. 8.—1 Cor. viii. 1.

† The philosophy of Aristotle being the foundation of School Divinity.

of practice, for a science of speculation, *Knowledge*, which is only the means, they took to be the **END** of Religion; and as that, which is the end of any thing, cannot be too much cultivated, they pursued *Knowledge* with such *intemperate* rage, that, as if Religion was only a trial of skill, and the rewards of it to be adjudged to the best disputant, they spent their whole lives in agitating and subtilizing questions of faith: Abundantly happy if, with all their toil, they could at length obtain the never-fading titles of *Doctōrs profound, irrefragable, subtil, and seraphic*. These, under the reverend name of **SCHOOLMEN**, long monopolised the manufactory of Faith; and wove their cobwebs thin and dark for the hangings of the Sanctuary.

To such then, you will easily believe, the **APOSTLE'S CREED** soon became too plain and simple. They wanted one that would afford eternal matter for dispute and wrangle. So, from the article of *Mary the VIRGIN*, they invented one of *Mary the GODDESS*: From the article of *Christ once offered on the cross for our redemption*, they spun out a *daily Sacrifice*: and the horrid idea of a *Transubstantiation*: From *his descent into Hell* they deduced the fable of *Purgatory*: From *belief in the holy Catholic Church*, the blasphemous tenet of the *Pope's infallibility*: From the *communion of Saints*, the idolatrous *worship of dead men*: And from the *forgiveness of sins*, the gainful trade of *auricular confession, and human absolution*.

But none of these strange doctrines being to be found in *Scripture*, they were forced to call in the aid of **TRADITION** to strengthen the feeble Powers of **SCHOOL-SUBTILTY**. And Tradition drawing after it a thousand other beggarly errors, which were all now to be supported; this gave rise to an after-birth of Heresies, and fresh employment for the foster-fathers of *the Schools*. So that at length, the true foundation, the simple faith in **JESUS THE MESSIAH**, was lost and forgotten; and lay for many ages buried under two deformed heaps of rubbish, **SCHOOL-DIVINITY** and **TRADITION**. Over each of which, like the *Ædiles in ancient Rome*, a venerable Magistrate

Magistrate presided, *That* called the *Master of the Sums*, and *This*, of the *Sentences* \*.

At last, in God's good time, this precept of *adding temperance to knowledge* began to be attended to; And the truth, which flamed out from the well-conducted labours of such, soon burnt up and consumed this precious superstructure of *wood, hay, and stubble*. When the true Faith, like *oft-tryed silver*, appeared again in its native purity and candour. In this condition we received it from our fathers. So sacred a deposit let us religiously preserve, and with the same pious care transmit to our posterity: Having always in mind that *we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets* (not the Masters of the *Sums* and *Sentences*) *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone* †.

The avoiding these evils therefore, is the advantage which *Knowledge* receives from *Temperance*. A reciprocal advantage *Temperance* receives from *Knowledge*: For *Temperance* being nothing but the withdrawing from all visionary pursuits, and abstaining from all rash judgment, out of a sense and conviction of the weakness of human understanding, was it not founded upon *Knowledge*, it would be in danger of degenerating into a slothful Scepticism, a total uncertainty of all things from a superficial examination of the most obvious; a fatal aptitude in concluding that truth was not to be found, from being too soon weary of the search. A condition which, we experience, hath befallen, and must, unavoidably, befall those, whose *Temperance* is not founded on *Knowledge*. But being thus secured, *Temperance* preserves a vigorous, yet a sober course: For the regular restraint which it imposeth on the mind doth not hinder us from the most active exercise of our faculties, but only confines it to objects fitted for our contemplation.

We have observed, that the reasonableness of the practice of *Temperance* ariseth from our sense of the weakness of human understanding. Now this sense should not only dispose us to be mo-

\* Thomas Aquinas, and Peter Lombart.

† Ephes. ii. 20.

derate in our own opinions, but to be candid and charitable to the opinions of others ; and till *Temperance* hath acquired this quality, it is partial and imperfect.

To render it compleat, St. Peter, therefore, in his next precept, enjoins us to *add*

*to Temperance, PATIENCE\** ;

that is, *long-suffering*, and bearing with the contradiction of Others. This is indeed the natural consequence of a perfect *Temperance*. For having experienced, in our own case, how insensibly errors insinuate themselves into the mind ; how plausibly they assume the air of truth, when called to account ; how obstinately they maintain their ground, when now become suspected ; and what labour is required to dispossess them, even after they are detected and exposed ;—having experienced, I say, all this, we shall be well inclined to bear with *Patience* the contradiction of our erring Brother. We shall still preserve the affection we had for him before he went astray ; and shall not suffer his being of another Church, or Sect, or Party, or any thing but an *unchristian* life, to lessen that affection ; but with *Temperance* and *Patience* wait the second coming of the Messiah to *separate the tares from the wheat*†.

### III.

The want of which *virtues*, amongst those, who yet dare to call themselves *the followers of the Lamb*, hath brought more desolation on the Christian Church, than all the persecutions of Pagan Emperors, or the eruptions of northern Barbarians : less Pagan, and

\* The original is ὑπομονή. The reason why the Apostle used this word rather than μακροθυμία, which may seem to be the more proper word for the sense I give to *Patience*, appears to me to be this—The Church, at the time of writing this epistle, was in a subjected and distressed condition. And ὑπομονή is the *Patience* of those in subjection, as μακροθυμία is the *Patience* of those in authority. Besides, ὑπομονή in the New Testament generally signifies a *Patience* attended with hope and expectation of better. And that sense I make to be required here.

† Matt. xiii. 30.

less Barbarian, than the author of the PRINCIPLE OF INTOLERANCE, who pretending to sit in the Chair of him, who here enjoins us *to add patience to temperance*, and calling himself the *Vicar of Christ*, hath not been ashamed to make *him* the pattern of his conduct, who was *an accuser of his brethren, and a murderer from the beginning* \*.

The Christian Church, in its infancy, breathed nothing but concord, love, and charity. It had *then* a spirit as pure, and innocent, as the state of childhood itself. The holy brethren were, *in malice, children*; howbeit, in *understanding*, that is, in rational faith, in vigorous virtue, and in sober knowledge, they were *men*. And thus was the *new Jerusalem built like a city, that is at unity in itself* †. No disputes, no strife, no emulation, but who should most excel in works of charity and piety.

But, alas! this glorious rising of the Gospel, which came with *healing in its wings*, and promised the arrival of that long-wished-for day of *everlasting peace*, was of a sudden overcast, and nothing succeeded but storms and tempests. For our evil Genius, the *Prince of the air*, was early at work to obscure and deface the promised triumphs of the *Sun of righteousness*. Nor was the engine he employed to defeat man's *Restoration*, different from that, with which he procured his *Fall*: It was, still, *Knowledge* without its regulator, *Temperance*.

For when now the SCHOOLS, by obtruding on the world a system of sanctified absurdities under the name of *catholic religion*, had produced schisms and dissensions; and the CLOISTERS, by perfecting their saints in a sour inhumanity and holy pride, had raised a spirit impatient of contradiction (and the papal history informs us, that their learnedst Doctors were the most unintelligible, and their Holiest saints the least forbearing); then it was that their Church, impregnated with these mischiefs, brought forth the Fury, PERSECUTION.

\* John viii. 44.

† Psal. cxxii. 3.

Of all the *Mysteries of iniquity*, that of persecution is the soonest learnt, and easiest reduced to practice : On which account it hath had its proficients, that were fit for nothing else, in every Sect and Party : But the honour of reducing it to a science, and conducting it on certain principles, is solely due to the CHURCH OF ROME. For no sooner was a people found who refused to receive *the mark of the Beast*, than, assisted by the Schools and Cloisters, it erected that infernal Butchery, the INQUISITION, the master-piece of its *ecclesiastical Policy* ; which, under the name of an HOLY OFFICE, as directly violates the law of Nature and Nations in the injustice of its *process*, as all the precepts of the Gospel in the inhumanity of its *judgments*.

But (holy Jesus !) should I relate the tricks, the treacheries, the frauds, the rapines, the delays, the horrors of imprisonment, the tortures of the rack, the bloodshed, the murders practised there, murders committed with so exquisite a malice, that *body, soul, and reputation*, are intended to fall a sacrifice at once,—should I but represent, I say, these things to you in their native colours, your just indignation would endanger that heaven-born Charity, which it is my aim to recommend to you even here, and here chiefly, where I am pointing out the enormous evils which the exclusion of her blessed influence occasions. And though I have expressed myself with the free resentment of a man who regards POPERY, not only as the corruption of true Religion, but as an insult on the SENSE, and an invasion of the LIBERTIES of mankind ; yet would I carefully endeavour to keep within the bounds of that charity which constitutes the character of a minister of Christ.

I shall therefore draw a veil over this unhappy scene, which gives so deadly a wound to the integrity of the Christian name ; and infixes so lasting a disgrace even on our Common nature. Content to have given you one general view of the PAPAL RELIGION, which, under the name of a *Religion*, is indeed no other than an impious *Farce*. I have shewn you, in their order, the three acts of which it consists : The first played by their *Saints*, and their subject, *fanatic*

*natic Virtue*: The second by their *Doctors*, and theirs, *unintelligible Faith*: The third by their *Priests*, and theirs, the antichristian *discipline of racks and gibbets*. I have shewn you likewise the connection these three parts have on one another; and the natural tendency of the two first to produce the dreadful *catastrophe* of the third. For when Virtue becomes stript of humanity, and Faith forsaken of reason, charity is soon lost in zeal, and piety changed to persecution.

Such a view should teach us to set a just value on our own happy Constitution, where *Gospel-light* and *Civil liberty* go hand in hand. And be You well assured that these two blessings must stand or fall together: That Civil slavery will make room for Popish cruelty; and that Popish superstition will support a tyrant in trampling on our laws. For the politician knows that the surest way of fixing slavery is to tie it on the consciences of men: And the priest hath experienced, that the mind is never so tame and servile, so submissive in swallowing contradictions, as when the body is already broken and humbled by the stroke of tyranny.

Thus hath the Apostle shewn us, that the security against the evils of dissention and intolerance are *Temperance* and *Patience*; which teach us to *feel* our own weakness, and to *bear* with that of Others. But here again the infirmity of our Common nature betrays itself; and *Temperance* and *Patience*, excellent and divine as they are, become subject to the general fate of human virtues, grow degenerate and depraved. Thus, too often, moderation and tolerance sink into carelessness and indifference, a fatal indifference for all truth, and all religion. That men, and even Churches, are but too apt to fall into that remiss and *lukewarm* state, for which, the holy Spirit denounced so severe a judgment on the *Laodiceans*\*, we have melancholy proof. Nor is such a degeneracy hard to be conceived. For when the corrosive ferment of bitter Zeal, which desolates mankind under a pretended concern for the glory of God,

\* Rev. iii. 16.

has, by the infusion of the cool and heavenly dew of moderation, been brought to a gentle temperament; the Mind, become tired, and ashamed of its late tumultuous disorders, is apt to sink into the other extreme, of a languid and unactive indifference. I wish I had no cause to say, that this very age and place have seen this shameful infirmity of our nature exemplified. And whoever reflects upon the indiscreet zeal which disturbed the Church in the beginning of this century, and on the nature of that *effeſtual* cure which began to operate, before we reached to the middle of it, will not, if he be serious and impartial, accuse me of an uncandid reflection. But to return. To provide against this evil is the design of our Apostle's next precept, which bids us *add*

*to Patience, GODLINESS.*

And then, (as St. James adviseth \*) we *let Patience have her perfect work*. For then, at the same time that we preserve the greatest moderation towards others, we shall keep alive the holy fire of innoxious zeal in ourselves. For by *Godlineſs* is meant the warm and affectionate discharge of all the duties of divine intercourse, whether in public acts of devotion, or in private sentiments of meditation.

With exquisite skill likewise hath our Apostle raised this second ORDER of Christian architecture, *godlineſs*, or the *divine virtue*, on the former, namely, the *human*. For, by this means, *godlineſs* cannot degenerate, as it did in the CHURCH of ROME, from not observing this direction, either into fanaticism, superstition, or bigotry; but will remain sober, rational, and truly sublime.

And yet there is another danger to which it is obnoxious. For by long and intense exercise in holy offices, the joy and transport that elevates the mind, thus filled with its true and proper object, God, naturally disposeth us to contemn all inferior things; and from despising the things, but too often, to despise the persons who

\* Chap. i. 4.

delight in them: And by making odious comparisons, like the *Pharisee to the Publican*, to forget our relation, our near relation, both by nature and grace, to the meanest of our species. Hence ariseth SPIRITUAL PRIDE, the last and most fatal enemy to true *Godliness*. Now for this, too, the Apostle, in his next precept, provides a remedy. *Add*, says he,

*to godliness, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS.*

Thus begins the third, and last ORDER of this Christian building. And, from this time, *Godliness*, placed between, and supported, on each hand, by the *human* and *social* virtues, becomes stable and permanent. And while it receives this united aid from both, it returns it back again to both.

We have shewn the benefits *temperance and patience* receive from *godliness*: We are now to speak of that which *brotherly-kindness* receives from it.

The most beauteous, and elevated branch of *brotherly kindness* is FRIENDSHIP, whose natural root and origin is similitude of manners. But *these* being as often bad as good, friendship becomes as frequently a confederacy in vice, as a community of virtue. So that this adorable virtue, the cordial of private life, and largest source of public good, by being built on the false foundation of *ungodliness*, hath often produced all that mischief to Society it was designed by nature to prevent. But when, as here, it is rightly placed on *godliness*, it stands secure from abuse, and is enabled to bring forth all its genuine fruits of public beneficence.

*Brotherly-kindness* is now only liable to one disorder, (for human depravity will shew itself to the very last), and it is this, that *brotherly-kindness* being enjoined to be built on *godliness*, or Religion, men are yet too apt, like the *Pharisees* of old, to confine their *brotherly-kindness* within their own *set* or *pale*: While all *without* are treated by them as the wounded traveller by the Priest and Levite.

But

But this narrow and partial benevolence the Apostle has effectually removed in the concluding precept of my text. *Add*, says he, in the last place,

*to brotherly-kindness*, CHARITY ;

that is, universal love of all mankind. This regulates and perfects all the other virtues ; and is, itself, in no want of a reformer. All the other virtues, as we have observed, degenerate both by defect and excess : This is incapable of either. Its nature and essence secure it from defect ; and its fruits and products from excess.

This then is the crown, the keystone of this heavenly edifice, this triumphant Arch of immortality ; or, as the holy Apostle more emphatically calls it, THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS \*. This, with respect to the foregoing Virtues, is like the gilt dome or covering of the imperial Palace. Without which, the strongest foundations, the richest ornamented walls, the best-disposed apartments, become, in a little time, but naked and deformed ruins ; open to every storm, and exposed to all the desolation of wasting elements.

WITHOUT THIS, if we may believe his fellow-labourer St. PAUL, the rest of the Christian building hath neither ornament nor use. The very FOUNDATION is precarious and unstable : *Though I have all FAITH*, says he, *so that I could remove mountains, and have no CHARITY, I am nothing*. VIRTUE, likewise, without it, is equally unprofitable : *Though I give my body to be burnt, and have no CHARITY, it profiteth me nothing*. KNOWLEDGE likewise without it is vain and brutal : *Though I speak with the Tongues of men and of angels, and have all KNOWLEDGE, and have not CHARITY, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*. Even GODLINESS is unacceptable without it : *Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and have no CHARITY, I am nothing*. Lastly, BROTHERLY-KINDNESS, when separated from it, goes unrewarded : *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not CHARITY, it profiteth me nothing*.

\* Col. iii. 14.

But,

But, IN THIS, as the same Apostle tells us, are comprized all the efficacies of the foregoing graces : For, like FAITH, he tells us, *it believeth all things, it hopeth all things* ; like VIRTUE, *it thinketh no evil, doth not behave itself unseemly* ; like true KNOWLEDGE, *it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up* ; like TEMPERANCE and PATIENCE, *it suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, endureth all things* ; like GODLINESS, *it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth* ; and like BROTHERLY-KINDNESS, *it envieth not, seeketh not its own*.

In a word, beginning then with FAITH, and finishing with CHARITY, or, as the same Apostle much better expresseth it, FAITH WORKING BY CHARITY \*, we come by just degrees to erect, after the divine model here given us, that heavenly edifice of *Christian perfection, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord †*.

\* Gal. v. 6.

† Eph. ii. 20, 21.

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S E R M O N IX.

OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

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MATT. XXIII. 9, 10.

CALL NO MAN YOUR FATHER UPON THE EARTH: FOR ONE IS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. NEITHER BE YE CALLED MASTERS: FOR ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST.

**T**O claim Rule or Mastery in matters of Religion, on mere human Authority, shews so much impudence; and to acknowledge the claim, so egregious folly; that one could hardly conceive any man, who had been *delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, should be in danger, either of assuming it himself, or submitting to it when assumed by others. For what FATHER, doth common sense bid us acknowledge, but him who *begot us through the Gospel; our Father which is in Heaven*: Or what MASTER, but him who *visited and redeemed his people, even Jesus Christ the righteous*.

1. But this Government of God's Church under the *Gospel*, not being administered, as under the *Law*, in PERSON, but by a

WRITTEN

WRITTEN RULE; the Ministers of the *word*, under pretense of interpreting it, took occasion to introduce their own authority; and on that, by insensible degrees, a very wicked Usurpation. The business of interpreting was, at first, modestly assumed, as a mere act of *Charity*, to assist the brethren in the study of God's word. But the employment being commonly confined to a certain *Order*, this act of Charity soon grew into an office of Authority, which at last put the *Law* and the *Gloss* upon an equal footing.

The Pretense for the exercise of this office, on which the Usurpation took its rise, was the *OBSCURITIES* in sacred Scripture. Unhappily, it was not understood, that the *very Obscurities themselves* were a sufficient evidence that the subject of them could never be matter of faith necessary to salvation. What perhaps contributed to obstruct so obvious a truth, was the great privileges ascribed to *Christian Faith*. So that men became more solicitous to have it large and full, than to have it pure and perfect.

2. The administration of Christ's Kingdom by a *written Word*, on his withdrawing bodily from his Church, gave another advance to this usurped Authority, of a more public nature. It necessitated the Church to assume a form approaching to that of mere human Societies; in which, Rulers and Governors were ordained to keep the several members in subordination to the whole; which could be only done by investing such Governors with a power to enforce a *common formula of Faith*. And though this was barely necessary to keep Society together; yet we see, how easily it might be abused, to introduce an usurpation over Conscience.

3. Hitherto we have considered the steps to this unjust dominion, condemned in my text, as they advanced from *WITHIN* the Lord's heritage: Others rose from *WITHOUT*. For our *civil* as well as *spiritual* Governors have been equally disposed to play the Tyrant over Conscience; and, not rarely, have agreed to share the Tyranny between them.

The *civil Magistrate*, the Apostle tells us, *is the minister of God to us for good*; that is, the means of procuring and preserving these

blessings, which our reasonable nature, and the indulgence of providence, concur in enabling us to enjoy. In order to this end, the enforcement of the GREAT PRINCIPLES both of *common morality*, and of *natural religion*, fall under his Jurisdiction. Such of them, I mean, as are absolutely necessary to form that fundamental bond of civil Society, OBEDIENCE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE. But, under this pretense, the civil Magistrate hath frequently attempted to draw in the WHOLE of Religion into his Cognizance. And this usurpation, many mistakes concerning his Office, and the nature of civil Society, joining in with imaginary necessities of State, contributed to support. He observed, that the *regal* and *sacerdotal* character were of old commonly united in the same person. And the particular reasons of this conjunction not being considered, he imagined that what was only an accidental coalition, was a perpetual union. Again, he supposed civil Society, whose sole end is the security of one certain kind of good, comprized in the temporal liberty and property of man, to be ordained, for the attainment of all possible good of every kind; which necessarily implied his care in, and jurisdiction over, Religion. Lastly he concluded, that NECESSITY OF STATE required an Universal conformity to the *Religion of the Sovereign*. A necessity merely imaginary: for wherever religious TOLERATION is allowed, diversities of sects never affect the peace of civil Society. Indeed, when the Magistrate begins to violate the rights of Conscience, then this necessity becomes real: but it is a necessity of his own making; it does not arise from the nature of things. Therefore the cause, which was in his own power to reform, he should have reformed; rather than have sought to remedy the effects by further injustice. He should have taken-off that iniquitous restraint; which, in forcing to Church-conformity, by civil penalties, hath occasioned the violation of the national peace; rather than, by additional penalties, to seek to regain that peace, in an universal conformity of mere outward profession; under which, the power of Religion vanishes.

Such

Such were the pretenses of our ECCLESIASTICAL and CIVIL Governors, to *Mastery* and Dominion in the *Lord's Inheritance*: From whence we may collect the care and tenderness of our blessed Master, in this early warning to his Followers against exercising, or submitting to, this Antichristian Claim. *Call no man Father upon the Earth: for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called Masters: for one is your Master, even Christ:* Which words plainly imply, that whoever requires religious Obedience, or a right over Conscience, by his own Authority, is an Usurper in another's Jurisdiction; and whoever pays obedience to such a Claim, is a rebel to his lawful Master. For revealed Religion coming immediately from God, the LAWGIVER, and the SUPREME MAGISTRATE, are one and the same; and all Authority properly resides in him.

But Man's claim is not only unjust, and Man's submission to it sinful; but they are both, in the highest degree, extravagant and absurd.

A jurisdiction in matters of Faith is what no human authority is capable of administering; as all human authority is subject to error and mistake. This is so obvious an objection, that the Bishop of Rome, who first set up this claim, or at least, digested it unto a System, soon saw the necessity of supporting it on a pretended INFALLIBILITY. And though this was adding blasphemy to usurpation, yet it made the *Mystery of Ungodliness* consistent: and free, at least, from the absurdity of those, who confess themselves *fallible*; and yet exact the same submission to their Authority as if they could not err. Which of them is the most absurd is easily understood; but which of them the most presuming is hard to say: For if one intrenches upon Heaven, the other ventures to insult common sense.

But the mere weakness of the understanding is not the only circumstance that disqualifies men for this authority over Conscience. The prejudices, arising from the passions, make the unreasonableness of implicit submission still more apparent. The most specious

exercise of human Authority is doubtless in those Assemblies called **GENERAL COUNCILS**. And yet every one, not an utter stranger to Church-history, must have learnt, that the same partialities mix themselves in their conclusions, which mislead *Civil Assemblies*. And, where is the wonder, if Churchmen, acting on an usurped plan, should deviate from the paths of *Faith* and *Charity*, when we every day see Statesmen, in their proper office, mistake the plainer road of Justice and the public Good.

*One, therefore, is our Father, which is in Heaven: One is our Master, even Christ.* And their Will, as announced to us in *Sacred SCRIPTURE*, is the *only Law*, to which Christians, as such, are held and obliged. On this Rock, where Christ built his Church, every private Man may safely repose his conscience. To this truly infallible Guide, we may commit ourselves with perfect confidence; in this assurance, that so much of God's Will as is necessary for us to know, is easy to be known; and that whatever is dark or difficult in his *Word*, is therefore not necessary to be known.

But if human Authority hath usurped upon Conscience; there are not wanting those who, on the other hand, have used Conscience for a *cloke of maliciousness*: and, on pretence of *one being our Father which is in Heaven*, have denied that Obedience to the **CHURCH OF CHRIST**, which, as a mere human Society, it might claim; and which, on that very footing, Christ himself hath commanded us to pay unto it, where he directs his followers to *hear the Church* \*.

But Authority, which these words imply, is a mockery without submission and obedience. Hence the reasonableness of subscription to a *general formulary of Faith*; which the nature of Society makes necessary, in order to tie a number of particulars into one body. A bond, which may have its due efficacy without violating any of the rights of Conscience: For all the jurisdiction which follows from it is only this, that so long as any member of the Commu-

\* Matt. xviii. 17.

nity professeth that general *formulary*, which the end of Society requires, to admit him into Church-communion, he be obedient to such Laws of his spiritual Governors, as concern DISCIPLINE: So far, the Authority of the Church, as a religious Society, extends; and no farther. For whenever a private Member of it can no longer, with a good conscience, subscribe to the *points of Doctrine* professed; or conform to the *mode of worship* in practise; or submit to the *rules of discipline* enforced, all that remains is expulsion, or Excommunication; but, unattended with opprobrious censures, civil incapacities, or corporal or pecuniary inflictions; in a word, with every consequence that may injuriously affect the person, fortune, or reputation of the ejected Member.

## II.

But to return now to my text. As the reason against *calling any one our Father upon the Earth*, is not founded in our own strength, and our neighbour's weakness, but in the common infirmity of all; the other prohibition naturally follows, *that neither should we affect to be called Masters*. For if, purely to preserve the rights of Conscience, and to vindicate the Authority due to God's tribunal, we refuse to acknowledge man's jurisdiction; with what face can we claim that for ourselves, which we have denied to all others?

And yet it is a melancholy truth, that when the great separation was made from POPERY, on this very principle, that it had usurped the titles of FATHER and LORD, due only to God and his Son; Those holy Men, who were obedient to the *warning voice*, which called them out of *Babylon*, were too apt to forget the condition, on which only, they had a right to vindicate their Christian liberty from the dominion of a MASTER; which was, the not pretending to MASTERSHIP themselves.

The spirit of Dominion soon betrayed itself in these newly manumitted Churches of God: First, by too unreasonably narrowing the bottom of Church-communion; and then, by persecuting of those  
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whose Consciences would not suffer them to subscribe to their terms. So that the simple, uniform GOSPEL FAITH, on which the Protestant Churches were professedly founded, soon became broken into Sects and Conventicles: And every defenseless Party, which had most suffered for opinions, no sooner got Civil Power on their side, than they returned the injustice with double injury. For Persecution, though it may strengthen and improve our Faith, doth not so easily enlarge our Charity.

It hath been offered in excuse for this behaviour of the Protestant Churches, on their separation from the Church of *Rome* (for, their perseverance in it afterwards, will admit of no apology), that the SPIRIT OF PERSECUTION hath a marvellous malignity in its nature, above all other errors, to corrupt and deprave the human mind. So that when every other Iniquity of Papal power had been now detected and expelled; this still skulked behind, within the close recesses of the heart; and, as often as it could disguise its deformity under a zeal for the *work of Reformation*, was ready to step out again and play the Devil.

This is not to be wondered at. There is scarce a material error in the CHURCH OF ROME, which doth not sooth and cherish some or other of our corrupt passions and prejudices: but PERSECUTION regales them all: It flatters our SPIRITUAL PRIDE, the vanity of superior knowledge, and a purer faith: It confirms our BIGOTRY, the mistaken zeal for the honour of God and holy Church; and it supports our AMBITION, the itch for *Mastery*, and misrule. Were it not for so powerful a bias, this Iniquity, which had most embittered their thralldom, and kept them longest in their chains, must, on their first deliverance, have been immediately detected, and marked out for execration.

It is true, however, there was another accident, which found business for this *Fury*, when once it had got harbour in the fair bosom of the reformed Churches. The Protestant profession was founded on the principle of FREE INQUIRY, and the liberty of private judgement. But as it is rare for men not to abuse a long-sequestered

sequestered privilege, when new recovered, by pushing the exercise of it to an extreme; so it happened in the *work of reformation*. Several curious fancies grew up with the simple Faith of that *Gospel*, from whence the Reformed, in general, sought their knowledge of God's will. And they being, through their long inexperience, as unknowing in the real nature of Church-communion, as inattentive to the simplicity of Christian-faith, through desertion of their Guide; these fancies, harmless, indeed, while held indifferent, were, by their fond inventors, soon made important, and the terms of Fellow-membership. The effect was fatal: It served to rend the Reformation into various Sects and Parties. We may be sure, the Church of *Rome* would take advantage of this miscarriage. They did so: and upbraided the *work of Reformation* with being conducted by a Spirit of confusion: They inferred, that when men had once left the *centre of unity*, and would seek truth by a *liberty of thinking*, which authorized private judgment, there would soon be as many false opinions as free Inquirers: And as many Sects as both. The Reformed seemed sensible of this opprobrium: But it being supposed impracticable to go back to the simplicity of the *Gospel-faith*; and on that simplicity, to regulate the terms of Church-communion; they contented themselves with stopping where they were; which they thought they should be able to do, by applying unjust coercion to all such novelties, as, either by their subtilty or plausibility, promised the birth of a *new sect*, or, by their grossness and extravagance, reflected dishonour upon *Reformation* itself.

To proceed. This Error was not more disgraceful to the *beginnings of Reformation*, than fatal to the *progress* of it.

It hath, indeed, been observed, and perhaps with truth, that the restraint of religious liberty hath made men more eager to exert and exercise the right of thinking for themselves. But this was accidental; when, after a long and indolent resignation of the understanding to authority, some casual persecution of a new opinion had served, as a stimulus, to quicken the benumbed faculties of

Reason.

Reason. And even then, the benefit was much allayed by the small helps which such times afford to the discovery of truth ; and the great danger there is in using such as may be had : Hence it was, that during the twilight of dawning Science, men, the best intentioned, and naturally the best qualified, did, in struggling to get free, advance such crude and hasty conclusions, as greatly discredited that *Gospel-liberty*, they were then labouring to promote. Of this we have many unhappy examples in the first efforts towards Reformation.

But the issue would be very different in different circumstances ; in such especially where the Spirit of Liberty had done its general work ; and had established the few great principles of Gospel-truth and purity. If, amongst these, the antichristian discipline of restraint should be received, adieu to all further advances in Reformation. Coercive power would from henceforth keep it for ever tied down to that imperfect state, in which Church Authority had found it. For, in this case, the *reverence* paid to the new Authority, under which particulars had sheltered themselves from an old Tyranny, would concur with its *power*, to depress and discredit private Judgment.

Nor would this prove a slight or trivial evil. For we are not to think the work of Reformation could be perfected at once. Those who know, in general, what prejudices old habits impress on the most vigorous mind, even while enlarging itself by Liberty ; and those who know in particular, how hastily and sometimes how tumultuously the Reformation was brought about, will easily understand, that the whole Gospel Regimen was not likely to be restored together : and that such a perfect recovery required time and leisure to study ; and freedom to profit by our studies, in *the Word of God*.

But still further. Did persecuting Churches discourage private judgement in order to take the matter into their own hands, that *Truth* might have the sanction of Authority, and they themselves  
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the honour of doing it further service, something might be said, perhaps, in excuse for this proceeding. But, alas ! their infringement of religious liberty arises from a different principle. They discourage private inquiry, not because it is carrying on by better hands, but because there needs no inquiry to be made : The work of Reformation, they say, is already perfected ; and the duty of particulars is now to acquiesce. A strange conclusion, which the practice of unjust restraint, indeed, hath made familiar, but is, in itself, a very indecent presumption. For, as a Protestant Church claims no INFALLIBILITY like the Church of *Rome*, nor immediate INSPIRATION like fanatic Sectaries, it must needs confess itself obnoxious to error : and from the unfavourable circumstances spoken of before, very likely to fall into it. And then, whatever mistakes it had committed through the condition of humanity, it might, from time to time, have redressed with good grace, on the modest principles of Reformation. This was an advantage which *infallible* and *inspired* Pretenders had, by their knavery and folly, put for ever out of their power. But restraint and persecution deprived the Reformed Churches of this advantage : For when once they were in the train of implicate submission, they grew ashamed to own they had any errors ; and with reason ; for what could more expose the criminal absurdity of such proceeding ? Therefore, whenever the force of Truth had worked a change in the general principles of a Protestant Church, as it did more than once in the matter of *Calvinistical Predestination*, men had rarely the courage to confess it. Which made one of their enemies observe, with a sneer, *That it was allowable for the New Reform to change : but not avow the change* \*.

There is yet another mischief behind, which is still more general ; I mean, that of Schisms, divisions, and increase of Sects and

\* Il est bien permis de changer dans la nouvelle reforme, mais il n'est pas permis d'avouer qu'on change. Bossuet Var. V. i. p. 405.

parties. For though, as hath been observed, the effect of Persecution, in these circumstances, is to stifle Truth; yet it gives life and vigour to a thousand Counterfeits. For, that thorough discipline of uniformity, which brings all to one dead level in the *Church of Rome*, is utterly impracticable in the *Churches of the Reformed*. Protestant Rulers, indeed, may, by *firring up* the humours, elude and prevaricate with their own principles; but it is impossible they should ever go so far as to be able to put in practice the principle of their capital enemy: And yet there is no other that hath force enough to *expel* those humours. Now although the *mischief to the State*, from various sects and parties, may be reasonably well amended by a just TOLERATION, afforded to such, whom the Church, from the narrowness of its communion, ejects; yet the *mischief to Religion* still remains. The Object of Civil Government is PEACE; and this, a *toleration* secures: But the object of Religion is TRUTH; and this a diversity of Sects, arising from the cause in question, will always discredit. So that, in this sense, SCHISM is a real and irremediable evil, which no Civil-prudence can palliate or cure: and which nothing but the Church, by widening its Communion, can prevent or remove.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain the equity and wisdom of my text. I have pointed out the good which follows from the observance, and the evils which arise from the violation, of the precept.

What remains is only to caution you from suffering the ABUSES here exposed (and now ABUSES are become the favourite topic of declamation \*, and the fashionable motive for disbelief), let not this, I say, prejudice you either against the REFORMATION in particular, or against the CHRISTIAN RELIGION in general.

Those Communities, and Bodies of Men, who made the first secession from the *Church of Rome*, did it, amongst other causes,

\* See Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous Volumes, whose reasoning, such as it is, proceeds, from one end to the other, on this single topic.

to avoid the *profession* of those *errors*, and the *practice* of those *superstitions*, which that antichristian power tyrannically inforced upon Conscience. The measure was evidently right. And if they narrowed their justification on that partial principle, *that their opinions were true, and their adversaries' false*, instead of carrying it to that genuine and more generous ground, *That Christian Liberty gives every man a right to worship God according to his Conscience*; and consequently, by so doing, laid the seeds of unjust restraint; this is no more to be admired, where no inspiration is pretended, than that, in *Civil matters*, men should labour to promote the general good on erroneous or mistaken Principles. Many of the Chief Instruments of our deliverance from Popery and arbitrary Power, by the late happy *Revolution*, proceeded, we know, in their accomplishment of that glorious work, on maxims, which controverted the true origine of Government, and were unfriendly to the benefits it procures. Yet what honest man doth not rank them amongst the favoured Servants of Providence, employed in the advancement of a general Good? Why then should the *work of Reformation* be more hardly thought of, because the Instruments of Christian Liberty were not more dextrous in disengaging themselves from inveterate prejudices, than the Instruments of Civil Liberty? We must assign both events to the particular providence of God; or give them both up to the direction of Fate and Fortune. We must either be content to join the Character of Protestant to that of Patriot, or we must throw them both off together.

As little ought those unjust measures to prejudice us against the *Gospel in general*: which was so far from leading *Men* into them, or encouraging *Churches* to persevere in them, that the genius of the Dispensation is manifestly violated thereby.

The sum of all is this, that if we would not dishonour our FATHER, and his Son Jesus, our MASTER; nor give Scandal to the good, nor a handle of blasphemy to the bad, we should no

longer elude this great Commandment; but obey it in that candour and ingenuity, in which it was delivered. *To call no Man Father upon Earth, because one is our Father in Heaven; nor aspire ourselves to be called Master, because one is our Master even Christ.*

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# S E R M O N X.

## OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

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MATT. XXIII. 2, 3.

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES'S SEAT. ALL, THEREFORE, WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, THAT OBSERVE AND DO: BUT DO NOT YE AFTER THEIR WORKS: FOR THEY SAY AND DO NOT.

**T**HE SCRIBES and PHARISEES, the public Teachers of the LAW, were now fallen into that depravity of manners, which the *Law* had foretold and condemned; and consequently, sunk into that general neglect, which is ever the lot of profligate Instructors, whether set over us by civil or divine Appointment.

An Impostor, who had a *new* System to introduce, upon the *established*, thus shaken by the corrupt morals of its Teachers, would certainly have improved so favourable a circumstance, by inflaming the general aversion against those who most stood in his way. But the *Son of God* declined this advantage: on the contrary, he reproved this popular prejudice, though so friendly to his own Mission ;

Mission ; and endeavoured to reconcile them to their Teachers, his inveterate Enemies, on such rational principles as best affirmed the People's Obedience, and their Directors' Authority. Secure in his own Virtue, he rejected the obliquities of human Policy : and, in order to rectify the error on which the mischiefs of a despised authority subsist, He instructs his hearers to distinguish between the *public* and *private* Character of the Teacher. He shews them that though Men, who *say and do not*, should never be followed for *EXAMPLES* ; yet, that Ministers of Religion, who *sit in Moses's chair*, and are invested with authority to teach the *Law*, are to be attended to as *INSTRUCTORS*, when, in their office, they denounce and enforce the ordinances of God. Nothing appears more reasonable than this distinction.

And yet in another place of the same Evangelist, our Holy Master seems to insinuate a very different doctrine. “ *BEWARE* (says he) “ of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheep's cloathing, but “ inwardly they are ravening Wolves. Ye shall know them by “ their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? “ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt “ tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Wherefore by their fruits, ye shall “ know them \*.”

Here, we see, it is expressly said, That they whose morals do not correspond to the purity of their doctrine shall have no regard or observance paid unto them ; but, shall be shunned and avoided as deceivers ; because the corruption of their manners is a sufficient proof of the imposture of their pretences. *Beware of false Prophets — Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* On the other hand, our text instructs us to reverence the immoral Teacher ; and to separate his manners from his Doctrine. *All whatsoever they bid you observe, That observe and do : but do not ye after their works.*

To reconcile these two places of Scripture, it will be sufficient to observe, That very different Persons and Characters are the subjects of these two different directions.

\* Matt. vii. 15—20.

They of my Text were an Order of ESTABLISHED TEACHERS ; with whom the custody of God's Word was intrusted ; to be dispensed on all occasions to the People. These Men had grossly *abused* indeed, but yet not *forfeited* their trust ; and therefore it was the part of every good Citizen to support them in their Character. And though the *Jewish Oeconomy* was now near the eve of its dissolution ; when part was to be abolished, part to be reformed, and the remaining part to be compleated, by the last Revelation of God's Will, intrusted to his Son ; Yet the dignity of Truth, and the eminence of that Person who came to bring Truth into the world, required, that the interests even of an expiring Dispensation should not be neglected.

But the FALSE PROPHETS, mentioned in the other Scripture, *who come in Sheep's cloathing, but with wolfish dispositions*, and therefore to be shunned and avoided as deceivers, are such as assume a very different character. The character of God's extraordinary Messengers, intrusted with the delivery of a *new Revelation* to mankind. For, about this time the expectation of the promised Messiah was very general. So that selfish and ambitious men were encouraged to personate his Character. Though the marks, by which they are described, might, one would think, have prevented the mischiefs the delusions drew upon this infatuated People.

Having now seen the perfect agreement of the different rules delivered in these two Scriptures ; Let us enquire into the *reasons* of them.

In the caution against *false Prophets* it is directed, that, in case the morals of a pretended Messenger from God be inconsistent with his Office, we should shun and avoid him as a cheat. And iurely with much reason. The very nature of things informing us, that, when God thinks fit to reveal his Will, in an extraordinary way, to man, he will not disgrace his dispensation by an unworthy Instrument. Both the *dignity* and the *interests* of Religion require, that the first bearer of it should be thoroughly possessed of that power of virtue which true Religion bestows.

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It is highly absurd to fancy, that so bright an emanation from the source of Light and Purity, as *divine grace and favour*, should be conveyed to us through unclean and polluted hands. Neither would the Author of good endure the near approach and intercourse of such an Agent; neither could the good, he bestows, be so conveyed, without stain and defilement.

The interests of Religion will not suffer so impure a conveyance. In propagating a new Religion, there are many corrupt prejudices to overcome. To see therefore the Messenger of God untouched with the importance of his high commission, and unrenewed himself with the renovation he conveys to others, would afford those prejudices too much aid and assistance.

But, this sanctity of manners, which is so expedient to support the honour and interests of the mission, is indeed the natural and inseparable attendant on the Office. For, in the promulgation of a new Religion, besides those marks of truth arising from the reasonableness and purity of the doctrine, which shew it worthy of God; to prove it actually came from him there is need of certain *miraculous gifts*, which the Holy Spirit imparts to those with whom he then condescends to dwell. But the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit is the *Sanctification of the heart*.

From all this, we must conclude, that, when our blessed Master warns us to reject all such for Impostors who pretend to an extraordinary commission from God, with morals unsuitable to their message, he doth it upon the best grounds of truth and expediency.

But now we must be careful to observe, that the case of *such* is very different from theirs, whom God, in the ordinary course of his providence, raiseth up, from time to time, as the bare Instruments of a REFORMATION in Religion; and who pretend to no higher character: Of whose agency, Providence avails itself to free an old established Religion from the errors contracted through length of time and the malice of men. Here, the same conclusion will  
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not hold ; most of those circumstances being wanting which made the *inconsistency* between the public and private Character of the *extraordinary Agent* : And God, now administering the affairs of his Church by the settled Oeconomy of his common Providence, may sometimes be well supposed to do here, as in the rest of his moral dispensations, to *produce good out of evil* ; to use wicked Instruments, in the natural course of things, to promote the ends of virtue ; and make the oblique interests of the world serve to advance the honour, and to restore the purity of his Laws.

Of this different conduct the Jewish History affords us an example. When God, at various periods, revealed his Will to particular families, and to his chosen people ; the agents and messengers, whom he honoured with his commands, were selected from the most virtuous amongst men ; such as NOAH, ABRAHAM, and MOSES. But when, during the established order of things, he decreed in the course of his providence, either to execute vengeance on the oppressors of *his People* ; to purge the holy land from *Idolatry* ; or to punish the transgressors of the *Law* ; he frequently employed the agency of wicked kings and rulers, to bring his judgments to their purposed issue. But we need not wonder at this designation, when we see Providence did not disdain to employ the like imperfect Instruments in a work that approached still nearer to the dignity of the first operation of divine Love ; I mean the ESTABLISHMENT of Religion : of which, that of the *Law* was committed to DAVID, and that of the *Gospel*, to CONSTANTINE.

This, our Adversaries of the *Church of Rome*, do not sufficiently consider\*, when with so much triumph against the work of *Reformation*,

\* The celebrated M. Bossuet says,—M. Burnet prend beaucoup de peine à entasser des exemples de Princes tres-déreglés dont Dieu s'est servi pour de grans ouvrages. Qui en doute ? Mais—montrera t-il un seul exemple où Dieu voulant REVELER aux hommes quelque verité importante et inconnue durant de siècles, pour ne pas dire entièrement inouïe, ait choisi un Roi aussi scandaleux que Henri VIII. et un Evêque aussi lâche et

*mation*, they object to us those impure Instruments, who had neither motives nor manners suitable to the truth or purity of that *Gospel Faith* which they pretended to restore. We are so far from being ashamed of receiving benefit from men who supply these circumstances of reproach to themselves, that, supported by the

aussi corrompu que Cranmer? Hist. des Var. L. VIII. Tom. I. p. 349, 8vo. Here the learned Writer plainly confounds the two different Characters distinguished above. The Instruments of *Reformation* pretended to no agency or commission from God, to REVEAL any thing to Man. And if they discovered an *important truth which had lain hid for many ages*, it was by laying open the *Scriptures* to the inspection of all men; after they had been so long locked up from the vulgar, in the learned languages.—But he goes on—Si le Schisme de l'Angleterre, si la reformation Anglicane est un ouvrage divin, rien n'y sera plus divin que la PRIMAUTE' Ecclesiastique du Roi, puisque ce n'est pas seulement par la que la rupture avec Rome, c'est-a-dire, selon les Protestans, le fondement necessaire de toute bonne reforme, a commence', mais que c'est encore le seul point où l'on n'a jamais varie depuis le Schisme. Id. ib. Now, though I take the SUPREMACY of the Magistrate to be a *divine work*, in the sense that all civil Institutions, founded on the principles of Equity and Justice, are the *ordinance* of God [Rom. xiii. 2.] yet it is not pretended to be a *divine work* (as the learned writer puts it) in consequence of its being an establishment introduced by the Instruments of *Reformation*: because the Character of *such Instruments* is very different from that of an *inspired Agent*, sent immediately from God, to reveal his will to mankind; into whose Message nothing merely human can insinuate itself under the form of a divine institution. The *Reformation*, itself, which these *Instruments* have established, will likewise, partake of the imperfections of the Founders. So that the *continuance* of an error no more impeacheth the providence of such a work than the *introduction* of it. But we will suppose the Magistrate's supremacy to be as anti-christian as this learned Prelate would represent it, and then apply his argument to one who was confessedly such an Instrument for the reformation of God's Church, I mean JEHU; to whom God himself speaks in this manner—"And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which was right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the House of Ahab according to all that was in my heart."—2 Kings x. 30. Here we have an *Instrument of God*, in all its forms. Let us put *him* then into the Bishop's argument, instead of Hen. VIII. and see how it will fadge. "If Jehu's destroying BAAL [the POPE] out of *Israel*, was a *divine work*; nothing could be *more divine* than his establishing the GOLDEN CALVES [the King's SUPREMACY] in *Bethel* and in *Dan*. v. 28, 29." I leave it to the advocates of the Church of Rome to find out a distinction by which their Champion's argument will be made to conclude for *Jehu's* Reformation, and at the same time, against that of Henry VIII.

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general principle, arising from the Doctrines of these two Texts, as here reconciled and explained, we find, in the perversity of Man, new matter of *Glory to God*. And we bless the hand, which turned the Avarice of a furious Friar, and the luxury of a debauched Monarch, from their natural mischiefs, to become Instruments of the choicest blessings ; the recovery of LETTERS and the restoration of RELIGION.

Indeed, it would be hard to conceive a reason, why this kind of Dispensation should not be esteemed as adorable in the religious government of the world, as it is in the moral ; where we see, and without hesitation acknowledge, the goodness, the power, and the wisdom of God : whose Providence is incessantly employed in turning the crimes and passions of selfish men, to the advancement of public Justice. How many wholesome Laws have had their birth from the oblique views of interested *Ministers* ! How many salutary reinforcements of them from the blind passions of disappointed *Factions* !

Indeed, if we should so far mistake, or, rather, abuse these blessings, as to turn our gratitude, or repose our trust, upon the Instruments, instead of the Sovereign Hand which guided them, Their vileness might then be fairly objected to us : But while we are careful to give the honour where it is due, none of that just reproach, which may fall upon the Instrument, will at all affect the glorious work it was employed to produce \*.

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\* Yet this sophism, miserable as it is, is the favorite argument both of SUPERSTITION and INFIDELITY : and constantly employed to discredit that Providence by which the work of *Reformation* was effected. The first step to the ruin of that unhappy Monarch, whose bigoted posterity has so often disturbed and endangered our civil peace, was the being perverted by this very delusion. *Father Orleans* tells the story from his own mouth.—Ce fut à Bruxelles au sortir de France qu'ayant assez de temps pour lire, il tomba sur l'Histoire d'*Henri*. Il la lut avec attention, et au travers des divers pretextes dont les Protestants s'efforcent de colorer le schisme de leur pays, il reconnut evidemment que cette separation, si contraire à la maxime d'unité, qui est le fon-

So far, as to the reasonableness of the caution against *false Prophets*. But now, as to the respect due to *immoral Ministers*, or the appointed Teachers of established Religion, who lye under the same imputation of discrediting their doctrine by their practice, we shall shew their case to be very different ; and consequently that the dif-

dement de l'Eglise, étoit en effet l'ouvrage des passions humaines ; que l'incontinence d'Henri VIII. l'ambition du Duc de Somerset, la politique de la Reine Elizabeth, l'avarice de ceux qui d'abord s'étoient emparez des biens Ecclesiastiques, avoient été les principes de ce changement ; que l'esprit de Dieu n'y avoit point de part. Il savoit que Dieu s'étoit servi de PROPHETES d'une vie sainte, pour être les chefs de son Peuple toutes les fois qu'il s'étoit agi de leur intimer ses volontez touchant la Religion ; que dans le changement de Loi, des APOSTRES revêtus de la vertu d'enhaut, et plus semblables aux Anges qu'aux autres hommes, avoient annoncé l'Evangile ; que dans les relachemens arrivez dans l'un et dans l'autre Testament, ce n'étoient point des hommes charnels, des ames vindicatives, des esprits ambitieux, qui avoient prêché la reforme, mais des hommes pleins de l'esprit de Moïse, ou de celui de Jesus-Christ, seuls canaux dignes de recevoir les eaux qui coulent de ses vives sources pour ne les point rendre suspectes de s'être corrompues en venant à nous.—I hardly need stop to observe, that the sophistry and false reasoning of all this has been exposed above, in the distinction, laid down, between an *ordinary Instrument* and an *inspired Agent*—He goes on—Des reflections si raisonnables ouvrirent les yeux au Duc d'York : des lors il fut Catholique dans l'ame ; et ce fut dans cette disposition d'esprit qu'au temps du retablissement il repassa en Angleterre—La Duchesse d'York, par un evenement remarquable, fut convertie en lisant le même Livre, qui avoit converti le Duc. Hist. des Revol. d'Angleterre, Tom. iii, What the *Priest* thus urges with the cunning of a Statesman, to discredit the Protestant Religion ; the *Politician* employs with the zeal of a Missionary, to decry Revelation in general. “ With the same impartial eye (says Lord Bolingbroke to his noble Friend), “ that your Lordship surveys the abuses of Religion, and the corruptions of the Church, “ as well as Court, of Rome, which brought on the *Reformation* at this period ; you “ will observe the *Characters* and *Conduct* of those who began, who propagated, and “ who favoured the *Reformation* : and from your observation of these, as well as of the “ *unsystematical manner* in which it was carried on, at the same time, in various places, “ and of the want of concert, nay even of *Charity*, amongst the Reformers, you will “ learn what to think of the several Religions, that unite in their opposition to the Roman, “ and yet hate one another most heartily ; what to think of the several sects, that have “ sprouted, like suckers, from the same great Roots ; and what the true principles are “ of *Protestant Ecclesiastical Policy*.”—L. Bolingbroke, Letter VI. of the *Study of History*, Vol. i. p. 209, 210.

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ferent reception which my text directs us to afford them, is equally reasonable.

*Whatsoever* (says the text) *they bid you observe, that observe and do: but do you not after their Works, for they say and do not.* That is, “As they are appointed to dispense unto you the doctrines and precepts of Religion, and to support and inforce them, with all the power of their wit and eloquence, attend to them, as to a public Character, with reverence; but shun their ways, and forbear to imitate their practice, which stands condemned by their own contrary professions. In a word, receive them for your *Instructors*; but beware of taking them for your *Examples*.”

The fitness and reasonableness of this direction may be seen, both from the NECESSITY and the NATURE of the office.

1. We learn from the experience of all ages, that, to preserve Religion amongst the people, there is need of public teachers, to be set apart for that purpose. Thus in the *Jewish state* they were appointed by God’s particular direction: amongst the politic’d nations of *Paganism*, by the civil magistrate: and wherever *our holy Religion* hath got footing, both divine and human authority have concurred to their establishment. The office therefore of the Ministers of a national Religion, like ours, is to support and cultivate that *Revelation*, which the first Messengers of it, by their extraordinary graces, had planted and disseminated throughout the world. For its divinity being *once* thus powerfully evinced, all that remained for the constant exercise of the ministry was to have the *exterior* evidence of its *truth*, and the *interior* evidence of its *excellence*, set in the fairest and most convincing light. And as this might be done by the common aids of *reason* and *grace*, the power of *miracles*, as no longer necessary, was withdrawn from the Teachers of Religion. So that it was now no matter of wonder, though it will always be of scandal, if men, equally subject with their hearers to the common infirmities of their nature, should, in more degenerate times, fall under the same vassalage to sin and corruption.

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However, that this will not excuse their hearers from rejecting their ministry, and disregarding their doctrine, appears plainly from the second consideration, the *nature* of their office.

2. Whoever assumes to instruct and direct the People, upon the footing of his own authority, hath need to be irreproachable in his life and conversation; because the truth of what he delivers rests upon the integrity of his character. Fraudulent and corrupt manners very justly discredit all he would recommend. And, though his prevarication cannot alter the nature of things, yet it seems to acquit his hearers for their neglect of him; and for declining to examine what he delivers on his own personal authority. This was the case of the ancient PHILOSOPHERS. While the first of them practised the virtues suitable to their name and title, they were treated with regard and reverence. But when, in after-times, they became as notorious for their immoralities, they deservedly sunk into general neglect. The First Christian apologists urge their vices home upon them; and consider the popular contempt into which they were fallen as the natural consequence of their profligate manners: For even uncultivated reason tells us, that it is absurd to expect *grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles*.

But a *Minister of established Religion* stands upon another footing. He delivers nothing on his own Authority. His office is to enforce God's *established* Truth by argument and persuasion. The Guide he recommends is not HIMSELF, but HOLY SCRIPTURE; which he invites all men diligently to study and examine. And if, in aid of his general office, he maketh one part of his ministry to consist in *interpreting* what he thinks may *minister grace to the bearers*, it is but to assist them in their Knowledge of God's Word: and to weigh the force of what he offers, in behalf of its Authority. Now what have the private morals of such a Character further to do in this matter, than to excite the compassion of every charitable hearer? who cannot but lament that so much science, and application to holy things, as is necessary to fit him for the discharge of his employment,

employment, should not have force enough to subdue his evil habits.

But if, on this account, we do unreasonably to set at nought a Minister of Christ ; how absurd is it to encourage or excuse ourselves in our vices, by his bad example. We reject the authority he has from God, we resist the evidence he draws from Reason, yet seem to respect, in him, the works of the flesh and the tyranny of enslaving Passions.

But, of all the delusions into which licentious men are apt to fall, the most unhappy sure is that, which, from the vices and imperfections of the *ministers of the Gospel*, inclines them to reject, or entertain suspicions of, that *Religion itself*, they are intrusted to teach : And yet I believe nothing has more contributed to keep men attached to their infidelity than this foolish prejudice.

Did the Gospel deliver, or was it suspected to deliver, any doctrines even of the remotest tendency to encourage its Ministers in their vices, much might be said for this strange conclusion. But when it is by those very doctrines that the People discover the true nature and enormity of vice ; when it is by those doctrines they hear the Preacher condemned out of their own mouths ; it seems strangely perverse to think amiss of Religion on that account. Surely these men of reason have not brought themselves to expect, that, in the ordinary course of God's providence, a mere knowledge of his Will, and of the truths arising from it, should have a resistless force to bear down inveterate habits, and subdue the strongest bent of human inclination.

In conclusion, I have only one caution to subjoin, That what is here said of the prejudices and perversities of the *Hearers of the Word*, be not mistaken, as intended for an excuse of the immoral *Preachers* of it. Their guilt admits of none. Against them, under the names of the *Scribes and Pharisees* of my text, Jesus, in the  
same.

same place where he vindicates their public character from contempt, hath denounced the severest woe of offended Heaven. *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, How can you escape the damnation of Hell?* But when he speaks still more directly to the *Ministers of his own Religion*, his condemnation goes still higher. *It is impossible* (says he to his Disciples) *but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones\**. The woe denounced against the *Ministers of the Mosaic Law* was for offences arising from enormous crimes: But this, against the *Ministers of the Gospel*, is, for offences, occasioned even by indiscretions. *Whoever* (says he) *shall offend one of these little ones*: and this, with the highest reason, both on account of the superior holiness of the Gospel, and the superior charity required of its Followers.

In a word, The Crime of a profligate life, in the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, is aggravated by many considerations.

The acquired knowledge, necessary for the ordinary discharge of their office, gives them advantages, in religious wisdom, above other men: So that if their progress in virtue be not proportionable to their superior knowledge of its nature and effects, they become very guilty before God; who, by the mouth of his Son, has assured us, that *to whom much is given, from him much will be required*†.

Their solemn dedication and separation to the service of Religion, likewise demands a more especial sanctity of manners. The very Heathens saw, that such as were employed about holy things, ought to be endowed with, or at least should learn to acquire, a higher degree of purity, than those who stood further from the altar: And accordingly public authority exacted from them the observance of a stricter and severer rule of moral conduct.

\* Matth. xviii. 6.

† Luke xii. 48.

The sum of all is this, That the *Hearer* should not entertain prejudices against Religion, on account of the bad life of the *Preacher*: Nor, on the other hand, should the *Clergy* suffer these unjust prejudices of the *Laitie* to abate their horror for a faithless discharge of their Trust. Let them equally concur in confessing the divine original of VIRTUE and RELIGION, in the midst of all their abuses of both; let them concur to give Glory to God, while each lies humbled under the deep sense of his own condemnation.

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S E R M O N XI.

OF CHURCH COMMUNION.

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LUKE. IX. ver. 49.

AND JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, MASTER, WE SAW ONE CASTING OUT DEVILS IN THY NAME; AND WE FORBAD HIM, BECAUSE HE FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US. AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, FORBID HIM NOT: FOR HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US.

WHEN Jesus, in the entrance on his Ministry, had thought fit to confirm the truth of his Gospel, by the EVIDENCE OF MIRACLES, he was graciously pleased to contrive, that that which was the credential of his Mission should, at the same time, minister relief and consolation to the *bodily* infirmities of those, whose *spiritual* disorders he was sent to heal. On this account, as well as to give additional lustre to his Character, he communicated of this divine power to his Followers.

But

But these gross and carnal-minded men considered their gifts and graces, not as a *trust* imparted to them for the benefit of others; but as a *prerogative* given them in proper to adorn their own personal characters. So that, on seeing a man dispensing the same blessings, though in the name of their common master, yet because he *followed not with them*, they forbid him the exercise of his ministerial function; as if they themselves had been erected into a Society or Company, with the privilege of an exclusive trade: And, with great satisfaction in this their conduct, they acquaint their heavenly Master with the silence they had imposed upon this presuming Schismatic. But they were surprized at their reception, when, instead of applause, they were received with this cold admonition, *Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us*. Yet they would have seen reason to be thankful for the moderation and gentleness of the reproof, had they reflected on the absurdity, as well as iniquity, of their behaviour. For it was but just before\* that these very men, who now restrained a *Follower of Christ* from exercising the virtue communicated to him, because he was not of their *Society*, had themselves essayed the very same power, and, through the deficiency of their faith, had essayed it in vain. So that we may reasonably conclude, there was in this *first* exertion of uncharitable restraint, what has been found in it ever since; not a little envy mingled with a great deal of zeal.

Yet as carnal as this temper is, and as seasonably as it was re-proved, it has rarely failed to shew itself in every age, and almost in every country, to stop the progress of the Gospel, and narrow the *Communion of Saints*.

And here, as in all other cases, where the genius of our holy Faith is violated, a text was at hand, to flatter their prejudices, and support them in their delusions. For St. Matthew † tells us, that Jesus, on a certain occasion, delivered himself in the following manner, **HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME**. A declara-

\* Ver. 40.

† Ch. xii. 30.

tion so opposite to the former, that it will require to have the two texts accorded, before we can draw any certain conclusion from either of them.

It is to be observed, then, that these different propositions are delivered by Jesus at very different junctures: so that we may presume they were directed to different objects; and may therefore be well reconciled, and made to stand quietly together. This is indeed the case; they bear a very friendly aspect towards each other.

The words of my text were occasioned by the disciples forbidding a man the exercise of his ministry, though he professed his faith in Jesus, because he conformed not to the discipline of the *Twelve*. But the words in St. Matthew were directed to another sort of men, his enemies, the *Pharisees*; who, when they were convinced of the truth of his miracles, were yet so prejudiced against his mission, that they affected to believe, *he cast out Devils by Belzebub, the Prince of the Devils*. The absurdity of which impious subterfuge, when Jesus had exposed as it deserved, he subjoined this general truth, *He that is not with me is against me*.

Here we see it is the dissenting from the FAITH OF JESUS, not from the DISCIPLINE OF A CHURCH denominated from him, which deprives the Dissentient of any share in him. And, indeed, as it would seem to violate the strong Benevolence of our holy Religion, to debar the faithful of their claim to its benefits, on account of their separating from, or rather not associating with, some of its professors, in Church-fellowship; so it would apparently dishonour its dignity, and defeat its peculiar virtue, to imagine that the opposers of it had a right to its privileges, on this only title, that they stood upon the common foundation of the *moral Law*.

These two texts, therefore, do not only agree well together, but do indeed imply the truth of one another. For if the benefits be so great, and so necessary to humanity, it is not fit they should depend on so precarious a ground, as this or that *mode of discipline*: And if it be the proper virtue of Christianity, to bestow them, it would

not

not be just that any other mode of belief should share in the honour of conveying them.

These reciprocal Truths, likewise, have a commodious application : and we may properly oppose them to those two extremes ; one of which is apt to bewilder the zealots for the *national Religion* ; the other, the lukewarm professors of *Christianity at large* : While one side supposeth, there is no Salvation out of the *pale of his own Church* ; and the other, that there is no happiness which *moral virtue alone* is not able to procure.

These errors are equally hurtful to true Religion. But the former only is my present subject : It is that which my text condemns. How justly, we shall now see.

This narrow, intolerant Spirit, which excludes from the benefits of the Gospel, all without the national or established pale, notwithstanding their profession of the common faith of Jesus, is alike injurious to GOD and MAN.

I. For first, it alters the **TERMS OF SALVATION**, as they are delivered in the Gospel ; which are, *Faith in Christ, and repentance towards God* ; by adding others to them, such as *fellow-membership in Church Communion*. To change the fundamental Laws of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, where he is the only Lawgiver, is an offence of the highest nature, as not only implying simple disobedience, but usurpation likewise. A Church acting with this Spirit, not only throws off Subjection, but assumes the Sovereignty : And is no longer the Sheep-fold of the good Shepherd, but the den of Anti-Christ, the Thief and Robber.

Again, This innovation is opposite to the doctrine of **REDEMPTION**, and foreign to the whole genius of the Gospel. They were not the sins of men, as they make collective bodies in Communities, but the sins of each individual of our common species, for which Christ died. The descendants of *Adam* had, through his transgression, lost the free gift of immortality ; which was as freely restored by the death and sufferings of Christ. But to whom was it restored ? not to collective bodies, who should worship this

Restorer

Restorer with public Rites and Ceremonies; but to every particular man who had a *lively faith* in him. The Gospel is the publication of the *glad tidings* of this restoration: And though indeed it was first addressed to the Jews, as a NATION, a Church, or Society; yet this was not because the redemption of Mankind had any thing to do with Societies of Men as such; but because the *Race of Abraham*, from whose loins the promised Redeemer was to spring, had been, by God's special appointment, collected into a Body, as amongst other uses, so for this, the better to prepare his way, and to mark his predicted original according to the flesh. But when the Gentiles had in their turn the Gospel offered unto them, the address was only to PARTICULARS. For though the terms of Salvation respected the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, yet the *Roman Senate*, as such, had no concern in them. And those *particulars* who received the word, became not necessarily, from the simple nature and genius of the Faith, members of any Community, but of the spiritual Kingdom of God. And though for the better conveyance of the glad tidings of the Gospel, it was expedient that the Disciples of Christ should be formed into a kind of Sodality, yet the founder of our holy Faith never intended this, or any other religious Society, to be part of its essentials; as appears from his express words in my text, where he receives one, who was propagating the faith in him, to all the benefits and prerogatives of his Religion, though he was out of the pale of that fraternity he had just then instituted.

Now what Jesus himself did, in this establishment, for the propagation of Religion, was done afterwards by his Apostles, in imitation of him, for the support and continuance of it. They erected Churches and Societies wherever they came: which being founded in one common Faith, were in Communion with one another, as the various parts and members of the spiritual Kingdom of God; but, at the same time, no more essential to that Faith than their own sodality founded by their Master.

Nay,

Nay, for the very reasons of establishing the Churches, namely the conveyance and security of Religion, it appears they could not be essential to the Faith; nothing more obstructing its progress than the notion of a Society's being essential to it, as the consequence of that is the confining Salvation to some one Church or Communion.

From all this it appears, that a principle, which narrows the communion of Saints, is contrary to the doctrine of Redemption, and foreign to the genius of the Gospel. Such are the dishonours this notion brings upon Revelation.

II. Humanity is not less injured by it. For first it turns the free gift of God into a bartering trade; the liberty of the Gospel into a spiritual tyranny. For when once it is believed, that there is no salvation out of a particular Church, and that the admission into it, and exclusion from it, are at the disposal of a certain order of men, the persons and fortunes of the faithful will lie at the mercy of their Ministers. And it will require a very uncommon share of Grace and Virtue not to abuse so dangerous a privilege; and to restrain avarice and ambition from prostituting the sacred ordinances of Religion to lucrative and secular purposes.

Of this we see a sad example in the CHURCH OF ROME: who, from the principle of no salvation out of its own Community, at length brought men to believe, that salvation depended on the Clergy's duly administering the sacraments, and other offices of Religion. From hence arose all the mercantile traffic of Indulgences, and the whole political machine of Excommunication. And by this means the CHURCH, that is the CLERGY, got themselves possessed of all the power, and almost all the wealth, of the Christian World.

Secondly, Religious Societies formed by divine appointment to spread and to support the FAITH, and, together with it, the great principle of universal BENEVOLENCE, became, through the bigotry of this error, the very bane of *benevolence*; by exasperating every Church.

Church or Society against another, for its exclusive pretensions; and by stirring up reciprocal hate and aversion to one another, from the supposed state of reprobation in which they all lie amongst themselves; till the whole Church militant, instead of directing its warfare against their spiritual enemies, turns its arms upon itself: and dividing into separate bands and parties, each damns and curses, smites and persecutes the other, who appears with marks and badges different from his own. For persecution naturally follows unchurching and reprobation. And Zeal is never at ease till it hath completed the system of desolation.

This may be seen from the conduct of the very men in my text, amongst whom this evil first appeared; for the Story informs us that their next exploit, after silencing this bold Separatist, was the calling down fire from heaven on the heretical Samaritans \*. A circumstance recorded by the holy Spirit to instruct us, how easy a step it is, from INTERDICTION, to the SECULAR ARM.

These are some of the mischiefs which arise from the wretched bigotry of confining salvation, and the benefits of Christ's death and passion, to one Church or Society; forgetful of that just reproof which so seasonably curbed this spirit in its birth, *Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.*

But falshood is never so effectually exposed as when it is traced and laid open to its original. Let us follow this error then to its source.

The nature of things require, that men professing a *Religion* should form themselves into a *Society*, in order to support that profession. On this principle it was that *Moses* and *Jesus*, the Authors, under God, of a revealed Religion, positively instituted that Society which the nature of things virtually prescribed: But with this difference; the Mosaic Religion being temporary, the rudiments of one more compleat, and given, in the interim, only to a single family or people, in order to keep them separate from the

\* Ver. 44, 45.

rest of mankind, it needed such a peculiar Ritual, as should give it a PUBLIC as well as a PRIVATE part; and make the *house of Israel*, as well as each *individual* of it, the subject of Religion. In this case, the *religious society* was *essential* to the Religion, and composed a Church of one denomination; out of whose pale no man could be intitled to its benefits.

But Jesus, as the Author of an *universal* Religion, though rising on the foundations of the *Mosaic*, had only the general reason for forming his disciples into a Society, namely, for the better security of the Faith; consequently, the *Society* made *no essential* part of his Religion; nor needed a Church of one denomination, within which the benefits of it should be confined.

Yet, so it happened, that the Rulers and Governors of this Church, which, as we say, arose out of Judaism, did not rightly consider *what Spirit they were of*\*, nor sufficiently advert to the reasons, on which that peculiarity, in Judaism, was founded; and so transferred it into *Christianity*, as they had unwarily done many others, to its irreparable damage and dishonour.

What hath been here said is sufficient to unmask that vile imposture obtruded on the early Christian Church, called the APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS. The Forger of which apparently went on this false principle, that some one individual Society was as essential to *Christianity* as it had been to *Judaism*: so that a system of Laws, equivalent to the Ritual of *Moses*, was as necessary in one Religion as in the other: to supply this want, the honest man, whoever he was, set upon his worthy labour. And in all probability foresaw, that his forgery would neither want advocates nor arguments, such as they were, to keep it in credit. We have seen of these: and the amount of their reasoning comes to this, "that if the *Constitutions* be not genuine, the Apostles made no Laws for the government of Christ's Church; which would sink its dignity below the *Mosaic*." They were not aware, that this imaginary advantage did not arise from the perfection, but the imperfection of the Jewish Religion.

\* Luke ix. 55.

But now let me not be misunderstood, as if from all this I would infer, that it were indifferent, in what Church or Society we profess our Faith in Christ. Some Churches, we know, have become so corrupt as to endanger the salvation of those who continue in them, and, on this principle, amongst others, we separated from the CHURCH OF ROME. Well would it have been, had the first Separatists kept entire, and not split and divided themselves into different Sects. But since Providence decreed otherwise, their posterity had yet a task behind; and this was, to chuse amongst the several Churches erected on Reformation Principles, that which came nearest to the purity of the Gospel. For with some or other, the Genius of our holy Religion, and the condition of mankind, require that we should join.

The choice too should be made with the utmost precaution. For amongst the various Societies of *Christians*, there are some, in which the holy *Ordinances* are more regularly administered; *Discipline* more equitably enforced; and *Christian Liberty* more watchfully protected. Now all these circumstances tending to forward the true Believer in the way of his Salvation, it is of much importance to him to chuse his fellow-membership in that Church, which is most exactly dressed on the model of primitive rectitude and simplicity.

Thus, we see, there is a wide difference between declining to join in Communion with this or that Church here, and excluding them from the *Communion of Saints* hereafter. Nothing can justify the latter. Whereas prudence, integrity, and common justice, frequently require us to keep separate from a Church of this or that denomination, when by joining in communion with it we subject ourselves to unprofitable, difficult, or dangerous ordinances; when it imposeth on us what we may think sinful or unjust; or, lastly, when it hath contracted that enormous stain and pollution here condemned, *the denying salvation to all out of its own pale.*

My

My purpose, in this discourse, was only to expose the vain opinion of inherent sanctity, or superiority, or exclusive privilege in one Church above another, merely because founded by a *Paul*, a *Peter*, an *Andrew*, or a *James*: or merely because administered by an Hierarchy, by an equal Ministry, or a moderate Episcopacy. Because such opinions have produced, and do still support, that wretched Spirit, which here, on the Authority of God's Word, I have endeavoured to discredit, and ventured to condemn: confiding in the Oracle of eternal Truth, *that he that is not against us, is for us*; and will be treated by our heavenly Master, not as a Rebel, but a Subject; and therefore should be now considered by Us, as he will then be by Him, who is the common Judge of us both.

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S E R M O N    XII.

OF CHURCH COMMUNION.

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EPHES. IV. 3.

I BESEECH YOU, THAT YE WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION  
WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED—ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE  
UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.

THE nature and genius of the Christian Religion annexes the rewards of the Gospel-covenant to a *System* of FAITH or belief: and, at the same time, requires and encourages examination into the truth and reasonableness of such a System. From the first circumstance arises the discredit, from the other the danger, of difference in opinion; whether that difference respects the *truth*, or only the *importance* of doctrines supposed to belong to the integrity of the Christian Faith. And on this discredit, and on this danger, is founded the admonition of my text, *to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit.*

By

By these *endeavours* the welfare of Religion, and especially of the Christian, is best consulted. For,

The flourishing condition of every system of things, whether *spiritual* or *civil*, consists in their being *kept* in a state of Peace and Honour.

Concord and uniformity in opinions, after a careful examination of their truth, does, in a supreme degree, secure the peace of the Church, and advance the honour of Religion; as will be seen by considering, what it is that most disturbs and disgraces both.

Unreasonable fondness for our own notions, and mistaken zeal for God's glory, make us eager to bring others over to our opinions. And in proportion to the fancied importance of the doctrines, and to the wideness of the difference, will be our endeavours to prevail; and at the same time, our resentment at their opposition.

Diversity of religious opinions, therefore, must needs produce suspicions very opposite to social peace; such as perversity of will, corruption of heart, and, what seems less uncharitable, but is yet more hardly endured, a narrowness of mind and sentiment. These soon proceed to open censures, and mutual bickerings; till at last each party regards all that differ from them as the enemies of God, and unworthy of their benevolence and love.

Nor is difference of opinion less injurious to the honour of our holy Religion, than obnoxious to the peace of the Church.

One would naturally expect, that the fundamental doctrines of a Religion delivered as the final completion of all God's preceding revelations, and intended for universal use, should be precise and clear; agreeable to the most obvious reason, and conformable to the plainest truth. To find, then, disputes and differences concerning Doctrines deemed to be essential, must needs have an ill effect on the popular reputation of Religion; and afford its enemies a handle (which the sanctity of its precepts will always make them very ready to lay hold on) to bring in question the divinity of its original. They will say, "That the mark of a divine truth is the fullness of its evidence; which is a *necessary* quality of truths proposed  
for

for general belief, and enforced by religious sanctions, both on account of the importance of the truths themselves, and the incapacity of the people to comprehend any but the most obvious. Yet the endless disputes concerning fundamentals seem to shew, that such pretended truths want this necessary degree of evidence : and so cannot have the original which they pretend to."

Such are the objections of men, who are always ready to take offence as they are to give it, by throwing stumbling blocks in the way of the weak and captious. And though the force of these cavils be but small ; yet the evil arising from the occasion is very great.

Having thus shewn the importance of *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit* ; the next is to propose direction for its better observance ; 1. By explaining how it became violated : and 2. How it may be restored to its integrity.

The genius of Christianity, as well as the repeated declarations of its Founder, concur in assuring us, *That it is by FAITH ALONE we are justified, or intitled to the rewards of the Covenant of Grace.* Hence some men, who held this truth in its greatest simplicity, thought they never could have enough : and so, instead of stopping at the few general and fundamental Principles of Christian faith, clearly delivered, and uniformly believed by all, they went on, and brought into the Church, as terms of Communion, abstruse questions relating to points obscurely delivered ; and made still more doubtful by having the Principles of the Greek Philosophy, to which the *sacred Writers* paid no regard, and with which the *Faith* hath no concern, applied to their solution. They did not consider, that the very obscurity itself sufficiently declared that they never were proposed by the gracious Author of our Faith, for fundamental articles ; nor consequently that he ever intended the profession of them as the necessary condition of Church Communion. Much less had this imaginary defect in the all-perfect *word of God* given any scandal, had it been considered, that the proper aim and business of the Founder of an universal Religion must needs be, to represent

represent the divine Being under the idea of the MORAL GOVERNOR of the World, without any further explanation of his metaphysical Nature than so far forth as it tended to promote the moral purpose of Religion.

Now the violation of the *unity of the Spirit* having been occasioned by these mistakes, we may easily collect that the means of preserving it entire had been the requiring no more, as the terms of Church Communion, than what Christ hath delivered to be explicitly believed : and these not consisting of many particulars, and all of them clear and simple, had afforded no handle for difference or diversity of Opinions : especially had due care been taken to express, as much as possible, those points of Communion, in scripture terms, without running out into modern glosses, conceived upon the principles of Science and Philosophy merely human ; on which, as we said, the divine wisdom of holy Scripture has neither relation nor dependence.

These had been the most direct and efficacious means, I know of, for preserving the *unity of the Spirit* : Always supposing that previous disposition of HUMILITY and CHARITY, which all parties confess to be necessary for the union of opinions, as well as of hearts and affections.

But since, through a neglect of these rules, this unity of the Spirit hath been unhappily violated, the next question is of RESTORING it. Which what is here said concerning the means of its preservation shews us is to be done.

1. By retrenching all unnecessary articles, to which the animosity of parties, the superstition of barbarous ages, and even the negligence of time, have given an imaginary importance : and by reducing the formula of Faith to the primitive simplicity : Leaving all disputable points, together with such other as no party deems necessary, to the free decision of every man's private judgment : whereby the terms of Church Communion will be made as wide as is consistent with the welfare and good government of a SOCIETY.

2. As

2. As divisions, long kept up, have inflamed the passions, strengthened the prejudices, and biased the judgments of the contending Parties; another, and indeed principal means of restoring unity, is the mutual compliance with one another's weaknesses. And this, methinks, would not be difficult amongst well-disposed men: as we must needs esteem those to be, who seek to regain this *unity of the Spirit*: For though these long contentions may have made us blind to our own infirmities, yet they have rather sharpened our sight towards those of our adversaries. So that a general weakness being mutually seen and pined, the very passions raised by our differences may be naturally brought to promote our reconciliation.

But notwithstanding this apparent ease in bearing with one another's weaknesses, it deserves a more than ordinary care to put the disposition in practice; as Ecclesiastics of all denominations are but too apt to reason wrong in applying it to their mutual endeavours for reconciliation. "The demands of our adversaries, say the established party, are for matters owned by themselves to be no duties; and against others they confess to be indifferent: why then should we alter the stated order of things to comply with their perverseness or imbecillity?" But those who reason thus seem not to consider that they themselves become guilty of the very miscarriage of which they accuse, and rightly accuse, their Adversaries. For if the thing in question be of matters indifferent, why are they not complied with, for the sake of so great a blessing as the *unity of the Spirit*, how foolishly or obstinately soever demanded? Allow them to be weak or willful for insisting on indifferent things as the terms of fellow-membership in Church Communion; Do we shew less of this imbecillity in refusing to comply with them in these indifferents? which, because they are so, we pretend our opposites should not be indulged in. For wherein consists their fault or folly but in treating indifferent points as *Duties* by an obstinate demand of them? And wherein consists our wisdom, but in treating indifferent points as *Sins* by as obstinate a refusal? Now  
when

when this mutual miscarriage hath defeated, as it often hath done, the repeated endeavours of good men on all sides to restore the violated *unity of the Spirit*, each Party may reasonably blame the conduct of the other, but it is impossible he can justify his own. Indeed it would be hard to say who are most to blame; 'Those who oppose established authority for the imposition of matters indifferent; or that Authority which rigidly insists on them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender uninformed Consciences: I say it would be hard to resolve this, had not the holy Apostle done it for us, where he says, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES* \*. *I myself*, says he, *do so, and all for the Gospel's sake*. This is the man who tells us *he had fought a good fight and overcome*. And we may believe him; for, in this contention, the Party that submits is always Conqueror.

But now, though the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT cannot be purchased at too high a price, yet UNIFORMITY of established worship may be bought too dear. Here then, in pursuit of this spiritual blessing we must stop; and not venture to go one step further: We must not dare to procure it either at the expence of TRUTH or JUSTICE. It must be now left to the good care of Providence. And this, as we shall see next, is implied in the very words which direct us to attempt it.

1. It is the *unity of the SPIRIT* which the Apostle recommends to us, to keep and preserve. But if, for the sake of *uniformity of WORSHIP*, we disguise, or betray, or give up any fundamental Truth, it becomes a *confederacy of the Spirit of this World*: at best a politic Union for the preservation of civil peace: A peace, where Religion is not the actuating principle, but only the cloke and cover.

2. Nor again, was this *unity of the Spirit* preserved (so long as it was preserved), nor is it to be again recovered, by restraint or CIVIL-COERCION. This would be violating that *bond of peace*, in

\* Rom. xv. 1.

which, the Apostle tells us, the *unity of the Spirit* is to be kept. For *force upon the Conscience* being a violation of man's natural rights, it will be always resented accordingly. Hence it is that Persecution for Religion necessarily tears asunder all the bonds of Peace and Charity; and reduces the Church of Christ to that distracted condition which our blessed Master described when he foretold the miseries that would arise from Persecution. *The Father (says he) shall be divided against the Son, and the Son against the Father; the Mother against the Daughter, and the Daughter against the Mother. And a man's foes shall be those of his own house.*

When therefore those *means* spoken of above have, through the early folly or later perversity of man, proved ineffectual to preserve or to restore the *unity of the Spirit*, the only remaining care to which we should then turn us, is the keeping fast the BOND OF PEACE.

Now the only means of securing this, as experience hath fully shewn us, is by a general TOLERATION, or full Liberty to all Christian sects (who give security for their good behaviour to the civil Government) of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own Consciences, without lett or molestation from the ESTABLISHED RELIGION.

Under this wise and well-regulated provision, when the blessing of *unity of Spirit* cannot be obtained, the Church of Christ may be still enabled to enjoy all the benefits which arise from the *bond of Peace*. So that though men will not be persuaded to go all one way to Heaven, yet it is to be hoped, when no human impediment is laid across the road, that good men of all parties may get thither at last; though some with more, and others with less difficulty.

The distractions and iniquities of these latter ages give us no reasonable grounds to hope for a better condition of the Church. It is therefore that which reasonable men would aim at. It is that which our own Church enjoys. Here we fought our peace: and here

here happily we have found it : The experience of a course of years having discovered that it is productive of much good, and preventive of many evils.

But the restless mind of man, rarely at ease with the present state of things, and still impatient for a better, has ever, as opportunities served, been assuming various projects, of visionary improvements, but all really tending to defeat or disturb this well-ordered regulation.

The most plausible, yet as visionary as any, is that called a COMPREHENSION. A word very expressive to distinguish the Thing, from that *Unity of the Spirit* ; and even from that *Uniformity*, spoken of above. An *Unity* is the agreement in heart of those who aim at the same thing though by different ways ; an *Uniformity* exacts a profession of the same thing by the same way ; but a *Comprehension* would be for tacking together different things and different ways, even under the existing difference of profession. The first is brotherly-concord ; the second is Church-communion : but the last is political-combination. Nor is the Scheme less impracticable than it is mischievous ; as may be seen from the following considerations.

1. This project hath of late been conceived by men who agreed in nothing but in a dissatisfaction with the present order of things. For one side having been unjustly prejudiced against the equity of a TOLERATION ; and the other, as unjustly, against the rights of an ESTABLISHMENT ; they readily concurred in a *Comprehension*, that seemed to supersede the use of both. But we needed not the gift of prophecy to foresee that it would come to nothing ; since the very thing which so naturally brought the confederates together, would, when they understand one another, as naturally separate them ; namely, the profession of inconsistent Principles : and if not so ; yet their Principles being at the same time *equally false*, it would make their staying together ineffectual : For what could a mutual falsehood produce but an impracticable absurdity. And well

perhaps is it for Religion that it always does so. For this *Comprehension*, the ape, and mimic of *Unity*, tends to the *destruction* of that spiritual SOCIETY, which *Unity* strengthens and supports.

2. The Projectors of it are generally private men, who undertake for more than they can perform. For it is not the temper of *Societies* to come into what is promised in their names, by men uncommissioned to act for them.

3. The main end of a *comprehension* being PEACE; indeed the only end that could induce the Magistrate to engage in such a business; and the Community being already in possession of this blessing by a well-ordered *Toleration*; He will, I suppose, be very hardly persuaded to exchange an experienced good in possession, for one untried; which, though it appear fair in prospect, yet the road to it may prove difficult and dangerous.

4. It hath been often essayed in vain by the worthiest and wisest men of their times, such as CASSANDER and GROTIUS. And it is no wonder this fancied *Magisterium* should still evaporate in the *projection*. For either the *Comprehension* must be so large and loose as to dissolve all Church Government, and even Religious Society: Or, if it be so tempered as to keep these subsisting, there will be need of all the regulations which distinguish and separate things *tolerated* from things *established*; and then *Comprehension* will shrink back again into an empty name.

On the whole, Since the Church of Christ hath been so unhappy as to be deprived of its greatest blessing, the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, let not the same, or even contrary follies, be of force to persuade such who are sensible of the loss, to try conclusions with what yet remains, the next best good of Society, THE BOND OF PEACE; but rather let them be content to preserve what we still possess, by such sober means as the genius and disposition of the times will permit us to employ. These we have long experienced to be abundantly sufficient. So that those who wish well either to the ESTABLISHED, or to the TOLERATED, Societies of Christians, have nothing to do but

but to prevent the exercise of their distinct powers from degenerating: This, indeed, might at last provoke the MAGISTRATE to lend an unwilling ear to the ignorant and destructive schemes of these vain and idle Visionaries: But till then, I suppose, Sober Churchmen, and experienced Ministers of State, will have this mutual confidence in one another, that nether the Church will abuse its privileges, nor the State leave it unprotected.

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## S E R M O N XIII.

### THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING ON REVELATION.

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LUKE XVIII. 8.

—WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, SHALL HE FIND FAITH  
ON THE EARTH?

**T**HIS is one of those fatal MARKS expressive of the latter fortunes of the Christian Church, as foretold, in the sacred Writings, amongst the Signs of the second coming of the *Son of man*. And with This, many other of those signs now concurring, seem, in the opinion of serious men, to point out to us the near approach of that awful period; the completion of the *moral*, and the renovation of the *natural* system of things.

But the labour of the Christian Divine will be perhaps better employed in searching out the natural causes of the rising disorders in the Church of Christ, than in hazardous conjectures about Futurity; although laid open to him in some measure by the import of those *marks*, which the predicted evils are supposed to bear.

And

And indeed, if He have not this discretion, his speculations will sometimes, as in the case before us, be rudely called off from the Prophetic matter, to other considerations, in which the honour of *Christianity* is more immediately concerned.

A late noble Writer \*, who, together with the Religion of his Country, hath attempted to erase from the minds of men the very idea of all that goes under the name of Religion, hath, amongst his discoveries of the FIRST PHILOSOPHY, laid down the following maxim: "That since the revival of learning in the West, and the consequent practice of thinking for ourselves, the CHRISTIAN FAITH hath kept gradually decaying; and men have given less and less credit to its pretensions †." From hence he would infer, and not illogically on such a gratuitous Principle, "that the Religion of *Jesus* is false."

I propose therefore to debate this matter with him; a point of the utmost importance to the honour of Revelation.

His Lordship's proposition may be expressed in plainer terms, "That the more the world has advanced in real knowledge, the more it has discovered of the intenable pretensions of the Gospel."

To expose the futility of his maxim, I shall first of all shew, that it was not IGNORANCE which gave the Gospel its early credit: Which is a presumption, at least, that KNOWLEDGE hath not since hurt it.

NOW CHRISTIANITY arose when KNOWLEDGE was at its height, in the latter part of the *Augustan* age; and in the very centre of human learning, *Rome*, *Greece*, and the *Lesser-Asia*. Neither was it propagated in confederacy with Sophists or Philosophers; but in direct defiance of all their eloquence and reasoning; over which,

\* Lord BOLINGBROKE.

† *The resurrection of Letters was a fatal period: the Christian system has been attacked, and wounded too, very severely since that time.—And again, Christianity has been in decay ever since the resurrection of Letters.*—Lord BOLINGBROKE, on the study and use of history, Vol. I. p. 182, and 185. Octavo Edition.

after

after a sharp conflict of FAIR ARGUMENT, it at length compleatly triumphed: Nor, again, under the protection of civil Rulers, or the Imperial authority; for these were all combined to its destruction; some with the arms of human learning and Philosophy, as MARCUS ANTONINUS and JULIAN: but the far greater part with the more peculiar argument of Tyrants, the sword of the executioner: Yet these, likewise, the Gospel, after a still sharper conflict of PATIENCE and SUFFERING, brought over to the side of Truth and Reason.

But what need we more? We have the noble Author himself giving testimony to the fact; and, in his *usual way*, destroying his own system of political philosophy. He not only confesseth, that at the publication of the Gospel, the Gentile World was highly advanced in knowledge, but that this knowledge facilitated the reception of its truths. Speaking of this very æra, he says—"Polytheism was mitigated; Idolatry was in good measure distinguished away, amongst the Philosophers at least. Oracles and the Arts of Divination grew into contempt: and if Heathenism was kept up by men above the vulgar, it seemed to be so only by the Priests for lucre, and by others for fear of having no Religion at all. THUS THE WAY WAS PREPARED BY REASON FOR REVELATION, in the Countries where Christianity first appeared, and which were enlightened by Philosophy\*." But his Lordship goes further; he not only confesseth that this learned age was favourable to the success of *Christianity*, but that it was most adapted to its GENIUS; since, those who published it chose rather that it should be submitted to the examination of REASON, than forced upon the world by the weight of AUTHORITY." "It is plain" (says his Lordship) "that the first publishers of *Christianity* did not rest the cause primarily or solely on AUTHORITY of any kind. It is plain that they submitted the Gospel, and the Authority of those who published it, to the examination of REASON, as any other system even of divine Philosophy ought to be submitted to."

\* Bolingbroke's Works, Quarto Edition, vol. IV. p. 373, 374. † Vol. IV. p. 267.

After this, to talk of any real advantage the Gospel can gain by *ignorance*, or any real hurt it can receive from *knowledge*, is reckoning much upon the advantage of favourable hearers.

Another *presumption* that Knowledge is not injurious to the interests of Religion, was the later conduct of the MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL. The noble Writer, whose suggestion I am here opposing, hath thought fit to represent them as a set of knavish Politicians combined together to support Revelation as the best system to advance the Wealth and Power of their Order. But whether Revelation be a divine Truth or a commentitious Fable; whether the Order be Ministers of Religion, or Confederates in Iniquity; it is at least certain, that men who have devoted their time and talents to the service of this Institution must needs be best acquainted with its nature, and with the means most proper to advance, or to retard its interests. And this their superior knowledge will admit of no dispute, if, as is pretended, Revelation was their INVENTION: for they could not but be very intimate with the work of their own hands. Now it is remarkable, that when divers accidental causes had concurred to revive learning in the West (not the least of which was the protection and encouragement the Clergy afforded to the exiled Greeks), this Order was amongst the first, as soon as ever it had given any signs of returning life, to cherish and support it; to raise and restore it to its ancient dignity and splendor. One amongst them in particular having done more in this service than all the Laity of that age together. I need not tell the learned hearer, that I mean ERASMUS\*. The inference I would draw from

\* There is one circumstance in the life and character of this excellent Person, that distinguishes him with advantage from most others, even of the greatest eminence in Letters: and will for ever endear his memory to the Wise and Good. His zeal for the interests of Learning and Religion was equally warm and constant. To serve the first, he began with discrediting the MONKS, the mortal Enemies of reviving Letters. He pushed them with all the vigour of his wit; and seemed resolved to give no quarter to that ignorance which was become the mother and nurse of all the bigotry, and superstition, which most dishonoured and defiled Religion. In this attack on the established

from it is this, That had the Clergy, who best understood the mutual effects which *Learning* and *Revelation* must have upon one another, been apprehensive that **LETTERS** would prove injurious to the **FAITH**, which it was, it seems, their *peculiar* interest to support; so cunning Politicians had never acted so absurd a part as to promote Learning when it was in their power to suppress it. Yet they did support it. And, with no great assistance from the Laity, advanced that degree of eminence in which our Fathers have seen it.

I know it hath been pretended, that in this service the Clergy were passive; that they entered into it with reluctance; that they went heavily with the current, which then ran strongly to the advancement of Science. But they who say so, know little of the history of those times. It is true, the poor *Monks* in the midst of all their blindness, saw well enough the havock Learning would

barbarity of the times, he succeeded so well, as to bring good Letters into fashion: to which he gave a new splendor by preparing for the press correct Editions of many of the best antient Writers both ecclesiastical and prophane. But his labours were not yet ended. He had a new adventure to undertake. He lived to see the *zeal* for Letters, which he had been so instrumental in promoting, carry the *virtuosi* of *Italy* into an opposite and yet more ridiculous extreme than the *monks*, when he first set upon laughing ignorance out of the world. The Italian Latin Writers (and almost every body then was a Latin Writer), from their dread and horror of monkish barbarisms, would use no word, not even when they treated of the highest mysteries of Religion, but what had been consecrated as it were in the Capitol, and dispensed to them by the sacred hand of **TULLY**. Erasmus observed the growth of this folly with the greater concern, as he thought he saw, under all their fondness for the Language of old *Rome*, a growing libertinage, which disposed them to think slightly of the Christian **FAITH**; and, what is still stranger, gave them even a reverence for the absurdities of the old Gentile worship. Now, this opposite extreme, he thought it equally his duty to expose: which he hath done in that immortal work intitled **CICERONIANUS**: and done so effectually, that the public was soon brought back to that just medium which he had been all his life endeavouring to mark out for their observance: Purity, but not Pedantry, in Letters; and Zeal, but not Bigotry, in Religion. In a word, the employing his talents of genius and literature on subjects of general importance declared him a **TRUE CRITIC**; and his opposing the extremes of all Parties in their turns declared him an **HONEST MAN**.

make

make throughout all the quarters of Superstition : and therefore employed their weak endeavours to stop the progress of it. But what was the issue? They made themselves doubly ridiculous : for the learned Clergy were not now content to despise, they found it necessary to expose, their ignorance. Soon afterwards indeed the world was surprised with the sudden rise of a more formidable Order of Religious, the JESUITS; who perhaps had been well pleased to have acted their parts like their predecessors, in the shade of cloistered ignorance. But the matter was then too far gone. These Politic Fathers, if you will, were indeed forced to swim with the stream : but they went in it with so good a grace that few have more effectually contributed to the advancement of Learning. In a word, this was the *general Spirit* of the Christian Clergy ; both of the Friends and Enemies of *Rome*, that from the time in which *Letters* gave the first symptom of recovered life, to the present, they cherished them with a zeal and assiduity next to what they used in the support and defense of their more peculiar charge, *Religion*.

What then must we conclude, but that they thought, and still think, that the Christian Faith is much benefited by the application of human Learning to its service? They were not mistaken, as I shall now endeavour to shew.

For, from these PRESUMPTIONS, I proceed to a DIRECT PROOF, that as the infant growth of the Gospel was not retarded by that flourishing state of Knowledge which saw it in its birth ; so the revived Knowledge of these latter ages did greatly support the established honours of Revelation, by illustrating its primeval Truths.

Since the more careful cultivation of natural and moral Science, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, and ANTIQUITY, have all contributed to spread a new light over the evidences of it.

In *natural Philosophy*, more exact enquiries have been made into the contents of the superior covering of the terraqueous Globe ; the peculiarities of whose arrangements give the strongest evidence

to the Mosaic account of the *Deluge* \*. And the immortal Theory of *Newton* absolutely demonstrates that intimate relation which *Moses* speaks of, between the *Creator* and his *work*.

*Prophane History*, the more nicely it is examined, the more clearly it discovers, through all its corruptions, an exact and surprizing conformity with the *sacred*: It affords a vast number of precious Monuments that serve to illustrate those obscurities in holy Writ, which time and the universal change of manners, both Social and Civil, have unavoidably occasioned amongst men.

The Science of *Antiquity*, which is properly conversant with the manners and customs of ancient times, supports the general credit of sacred Scripture by illustrating those internal marks that prove the high antiquity to which they pretend.

The Science of *Morals* hath been more successfully pursued, and more happily investigated, since the revival of Letters, than at any other period whatever. And this, reflected upon Gospel-morality, hath thrown such a lustre on the purity of its nature, on the utility of its general direction, and on the truth of revelation principles, as shews its original to be indeed divine.

True Knowledge being thus friendly to the FAITH, you will naturally expect, I suppose, to find the great Masters of Science confirming what is here said, by their warm attachment to REVELATION. The expectation is not unreasonable. And you have the

\* The contents of the Ocean are found, in a petrified state, all over the terrestrial part of the Globe; and in places most distant from those in which they were first formed. I say they are found over all the earth, but not in all sorts of soils indifferently. And from these two circumstances considered together, an incontestable proof of the truth of the Mosaic relation, I think, may be deduced. Had these adventitious fossils not been found in every quarter of the Globe, we could not conclude the Deluge to have been *universal*: and had they been found in all kind of soils indifferently, we might suppose them to be (what they were once commonly thought) the natives of those narrow beds in which they are discovered, and a kind of *lusus naturæ*. But when we see them spread over every climate, and yet only in such soils as are proper for the preservation of *foreign bodies*, we rightly conclude them to be the deposit of a Deluge of waters which covered the whole face of the Earth.

pleasure to see every great name amongst the Laity, such as BACON, BOYLE, NEWTON, GROTIUS, SELDEN, SYDENHAM, PASCHAL, and LOCKE, no less respectable for their sincere belief of *Christianity* than for their profound Knowledge in their several Professions. Nor should you suffer yourselves to suspect that the weight of this argument is at all diminished if there be others, accounted in the rank of Learned Men, who have affected to think slightly of the Religion of their Country. For when the matter is to be decided by Authority, Hobbes I suppose will not be opposed to Newton, or Spinoza to Bacon. Much less would any one compare Toland with Grotius, or Tindal with Selden, or Coward and Morgan with Harvey and Sydenham.

If then true Science hath thus advanced the credit and glory of REVELATION, by the nature of its principles, and the sentiments of its professors; and if yet there hath been, ever since the revival of LETTERS, a gradual defection from the Faith, we must seek for the causes of this Apostasy in something else than in a SUPER-ABUNDANCE OF KNOWLEDGE. And on a fair inquiry, I persuade myself, they will not be difficult to find.

We have just seen, how one division of the learned world, into the GREAT and the SMALL *Philosophers*, contributes to the credit of Religion: another, into the MORAL and the IMMORAL, would no less support its honour, were it not too invidious a task to oppose these to one another, by name. But the various instances may be safely trusted to every man's own recollection. For who hath not observed, that in the learned world every the most virtuous person hath been most eminent for his adherence to *Revelation*: and that such who have distinguished themselves in the cause of *free-thinking* have been generally as remarkable for the free indulgence of their passions. Nor is it at all strange, that, when men have nothing to hope, and much to fear from a Religion proposed to them as true, they should for their own ease be willing to find, or, if that fails, to suspect it to be false. And when once men are in this disposition,

tion, they will never want objections to **FACTS** established by the fullest evidence; or to **DOCTRINES** supported by the strongest reasoning.

But, it will be said, perhaps, "Why did not this natural, though unreasonable, prejudice appear sooner? Men have been always vicious; and have ever since the first appearance of *Christianity* been made uneasy in their vices."

The fact is true. But the answer to the question easy. We are to consider that, for many ages preceding the restoration of Learning, **SUPERSTITION** had invented a thousand expedients to evade the threats of Religion against a wicked life, to reconcile the difference; and to make Salvation consistent with the practice of habitual immorality. So that bad men were under no temptation to quarrel with the evidences of their Faith, in order to enjoy their vices in quiet.

But the case is much altered since Religion, by the assistance of revived Learning, hath been restored to its ancient purity. The original terms of the Gospel Covenant between God and man are seen to be immovable: That *habitual crimes* can be no otherwise atoned for but by *sincere repentance*: And that the very essence of *repentance* consists in forsaking vice, and returning to the actual practice of virtue.

However, admitting so rare a phenomenon as an Unbeliever of real learning and reasonable morals; it would be absurd to ascribe this to his superior Knowledge, when so natural an account may be given of this traverse, from his learned passions and infirmities. A *progress in arts* is far from working that change in the heart and affections which a *progress in the practice of Religion* is wont to do. The higher you advance in **FAITH**, the easier you subdue, and the more skilfully you balance your appetites and affections: but too often, the further you advance in **SCIENCE**, the more you inflame those appetites and render them intractable. **PRIDE** and **VANITY** grow spontaneously out of the consciousness, whether real or imaginary, of superior knowledge. As these passions render us  
impatient

impatient of instruction, and scarcely submitting to be *self-taught*, so they are most gratified when we quit the opinions of the croud. "If all my Learning (says such a one to himself) only leads me to think with the *Many*, and to have my science confounded in the mass of popular opinions, how shall I be distinguished with advantage from the ignorant and illiterate? To give such people a due esteem for my importance, they should see that Learning leads men to conclusions, very distant from common sentiments. These visions, light and fantastic as they are, have, I am afraid, led many scholars to affect a singularity in thinking, which their better judgments, if not their very hearts, condemned.

This infirmity of learned heads did not escape the noble Writer, whose maxim is now under consideration; when, speaking of what he calls *the resurrection of Letters*, he said, "In the darkness of ignorance, superstition prevailed: in the light of knowledge, overweening curiosity, the offspring of SELF-CONCEIT; as self-conceit is of PRIDE \*." And in another place, "As men advance in Knowledge, their *self-conceit* is apt to increase †."

But if simple vanity be thus strong, how powerful will it prove when joined to warm resentments for neglected merit or injurious suspicions? I wish I could not say, there have been some, even of those consecrated to the service of Religion, who have suffered those passions and resentments to carry them into the quarters of the Enemy.

But as to the Learned of that time, many circumstances concurred to indispose them towards the Religion of their Country. They went to the cultivation of the *new Learning*, as it was then called, with a sort of enthusiasm. They were promised wonderful things from it. And nothing could more flatter their passions than to fancy they had discovered by it, that the Religion, under which sense and conscience had lain so long oppressed, was false; a prejudice they would be very ready to indulge out of revenge to the

\* Vol. iv. p. 170.

† Vol. iv. p. 171.

*Monks*, who employed all their Authority to discredit and discountenance the *new Learning*, and all the favourers of it.

Again, there are some Sciences little conversant in that kind of proof by which the truths of Religion are supported; such as the simple and mixed Mathematics, which labour only in strict demonstration. What wonder then, that the simple Demonstrator \*, unused to calculate the numerous combinations that constitute the various degrees of moral probability, should, when the evidence for Religion came before him, appear little fitted, and less disposed to estimate its force?

To the *incapacity*, which an addiction to certain Sciences induceth, may be added the *prejudices* which certain circumstances in the state of the two Religious parties, that divide the Western world, were apt to occasion. In the CHURCH OF ROME, the gross corruptions; and amongst PROTESTANTS, their endless divisions into sects and factions. The *corruptions* were apt to make doubting men suspect *Revelation* to be only a knavish Fable; the *divisions*, that it was only an enthusiastic dream.

Hitherto it appears that it is not Learning, but the infirmities of those who profess Learning, which produce that infidelity whose origin is the subject of our inquiry.

But certainly, its largest source is *pretended learning* and *superficial knowledge*; the very defect and want of that, to which his Lordship ascribes the present propensity to unbelief. In a state of *simple ignorance* men hardly get so far as into the confines of doubt: which was their case before the *resurrection of Letters*: Superficial

\* “ Les Geomètres mêmes (says a very able judge of these matters) qui devoient mieux connoître les avantages de l'analyse, que les autres Philosophes, donnent souvent la preference à la synthese. Aussi, quand ils sortent de leurs calculs pour entrer dans les recherches d'une nature differente, on ne leur trouve plus la même clarté, la même precision, ni la même *etendue d'esprit*. Nous avons quatre metaphisiciens celebres, DESCARTES, MALEBRANCHE, LEIBNITZ, et LOCKE. Le dernier est le seul qui ne fut pas Geometre, et de combien n'est il pas superieur aux trois autres ? ” Essai sur l'Origine des Connoissances Humaines, 2de partie, p. 289, 90.

knowledge soon brings them thither, and supplies them with many shallow objections against Religion : and this has been the state of things ever since. And the vanity that accompanies learned pursuits being stronger and more unchecked in the entrance to Science than in the more advanced stages of it, as having but little of that *conscious ignorance* to counterbalance it, which increases in proportion to our progress, the doubts and objections of the half-learned will soon terminate in settled infidelity. Hence it is we find the leaders and professors of Free-thinking to have been generally of this class of men. And hence it is, that there are now much fewer Unbelievers amongst eminent men in the learned Professions than at the revival of Letters. For as Science has kept advancing, and the true theory of nature opened, men's hard thoughts of Revelation have gradually lessened and subsided. The Philosophy of *Aristotle*, when the Schools first got to its source in the sixteenth Century, inclined the Italian literati to *Atheism* : and the new inventions of *Descartes*, in the seventeenth, disposed the French to *naturalism*. They have both now given place to the true theory of nature. And Newton, as well by his doctrine as example, has taught the Philosophic world to believe and tremble. Nor is the present overflow of infidelity any objection to the truth of this observation. For, as to the great body of unbelievers, it is neither deep, nor yet superficial, Learning that gives the bias. This, indeed, may form the *leaders* : but it is FASHION only (as in every other folly) that perverts the *followers*.

For just as in the times of IGNORANT DEVOTION, *believing* was the mode ; so in these our days of LEARNED INDIFFERENCE it is *free-thinking*. It is not much nor little learning, it is not knowledge, nor yet ignorance, which influences the body of mankind in their Opinions, any more than in their dress ; it is CREDITABLE IMITATION, the thing we call FASHION.

In a word, if we consider LEARNING in the sense of a *discipline for the improvement of the understanding*, it has at all times been of

infinite advantage to REVELATION. Yet it must not be denied, that it may sometimes be so circumstanced as to produce much mischief. I have shewn that both antient and modern Learning have contributed to the propagation and establishment of the Christian Religion: yet it is but too true that the one, in the *genius of its Doctrines*, and the other in the *mode of its propagation*, have, with great good, accidentally occasioned variety of evil.

The *metaphysical principles* of antient Philosophy were destructive of the great Doctrines of our Faith \*; which made St. Paul caution the Churches, lest any should *spoil them through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men* †.

The *mode of propagation* has done all the mischief in these latter times. The use of Letters among the Antients, even in the flourishing state of them, was confined to the FEW; who, by their stations in life, were enabled to make a real and a reasonable improvement. But since the invention of printing, the *instruments of Knowledge* have grown so common as to get into the hands of the PEOPLE: where, instead of improving the understandings, they have had no other effect than to inflame the passions: of which, RELIGION, SOCIETY, and even LETTERS themselves, now feel the miserable effects.

On the whole then we see, how ridiculous as well as malicious the noble person's observation is, "That Revelation owes its credit to ignorance; and loses ground as Learning and Science advance against it." For what there is of fact, on which he supports his observation, is only this, that *there is a greater number of Unbelievers amongst the professors of Christianity since the revival of Letters than before*. But if this inference be just, it would hold as well against the *being of a God*, as against the *truth of Revelation*: for, to one Atheist in the Monkish times, there were a hundred at the revival of Learning. One degree of science is fitted to discover error; and another, to find out the truth. In the interim, the infirmity

\* Divine Legation, Book III. Sect. 4.

† Col. ii. 8.

of our nature betrays us, and in running from an absurdity we rarely stop till we be got intangled in its opposite.

But the inference is, in every view, so groundless, that *Christianity* (as we have shewn) made its first way against the highest powers and prejudices, in the very centre of the most flourishing age of Knowledge.

At the last revival of Letters it received the strongest aid from human Science; and the sincerest homage from the most illustrious names that ever adorned or cultivated Letters.

The only enemies it found amongst the Learned were either such as were immoral in their lives; or were tied down by a false Philosophy to inveterate prejudices; or were carried away by vanity; or were incompetent judges by their unacquaintance with the nature of the proofs; or lastly such who *pretended only* to a Knowledge they indeed had not.

And as to the gross body of licentious men, Learning had no concern in the affair; These were entirely under the sway and influence of FASHION.

From all this we conclude, that let INFIDELITY be risen to what height it will, it is not yet of that kind which brings any real discredit to REVELATION.

The Rejectors of it, therefore, would do well to consider the grounds on which they stand; and what account they will be able to give to the great Judge of all the earth at his second coming, for having contributed to that horrid defection which he hath foretold. will be then found amongst men.



**T H R E E   S E R M O N S**

**P R E A C H E D   A N D   P U B L I S H E D**

**O N   T H E   O C C A S I O N   O F**

**T H E   L A T E   R E B E L L I O N ,**

**I N   M D C C X L V .**

**A N D**

**A   D I S C O U R S E**

**O N**

**T H E   N A T U R E   O F   T H E   M A R R I A G E - U N I O N .**



## S E R M O N I.

OCCASIONED BY

## THE UNNATURAL REBELLION.

Preached and published in the Month of November 1745,  
while the Rebel-Army was in England.

I Ep. PETER ii. 17.

FEAR GOD, HONOUR THE KING.

**T**HE holy Apostle has, with great propriety, joined together these two precepts of our duty to GOD and the CIVIL MAGISTRATE; as well knowing what mutual influence Religion and Society have, and what mutual aid they bestow, upon one another: that the truth and purity of Faith prescribe and recommend the rules of civil justice; and that a free and equal Government favours and encourages the profession of the truth.

But not only the genius and disposition of Religion and Government dispose them to this friendly intercourse of good offices; but the actual administrations of their respective powers are always imparting

parting mutual assistance to one another. The State lending its coercive power to restrain and punish that vice and immorality which renders all religious profession, contaminated with it, vain before God ; and the Church employing the terrors of the Lord to enforce obedience to the Magistrate's lawful commands : teaching men subjection, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

But this is a truth, which, I presume, will easily find its way to an *English* audience ; who now actually possess and enjoy all those blessings which arise from so natural and sacred an Union. For by the *equity* of our *civil* Constitution the *consciences of men* are not only left free, but protected in their liberty : and by the truth and power of our *religious*, the *rights of citizens* have been more than once supported, when threatened by arbitrary and illegal power.

But then, though true and pure Religion, and a just and equal Government, be thus fruitful of mutual good ; Superstition and Despotic power are, on the contrary, as productive of mutual evil ; incessantly inflaming one another's disorders, till they sink the wretched victims of their tyranny into the lowest state of misery and distress.

For when once Superstition hath violated the rights of conscience, then, in order to dispose the civil magistrate to become the executioner of their decrees, or, if they fail in that, to be an unconcerned Spectator of their violence, they preach up his *DIVINE RIGHT*, and a power from Heaven like their own : with a free invitation to make as bold with property, as they have done with conscience. On the other side, whenever the civil Magistrate aims to play the tyrant, he naturally begins with giving up sense and piety for a prey to Superstition and Church censures ; in order to save labour, and to receive one half of the man already subdued to his hands.

In a word, that Religion, which renders void the first precept of my text, by taking away the *fear of God*, will always be for introducing a form of Government which renders void the second, by taking away all *honour from the King*. And so, reciprocally,  
will

will an *honourless King* promote the worship of a *fearless God*. And for the truth of this, we need look no further than upon the insolent attempts, just now making, to overturn our happy constitution in Church and State, and, in its stead, to introduce **POPERY** and **ARBITRARY POWER**.

But of this complicated monster, now crawling from the North, which, Amphibena like, has at either end a Head, it is sufficient to observe, that though Each may lead and follow in its turn, yet they are still inseparable: and that between them both, they effectually make void this great Christian summary of human conduct, to *fear God and honour the King*: **POPERY** entirely effacing from the *minds* of men all religious fear of the Deity; and **ARBITRARY POWER** tearing from their *affections* all manly honour for the Magistrate.

To begin therefore with **POPERY**, under its best face, that of a *Religion*, though it be, in truth, little other than a mere *Antichristian Policy*.

This Religion strips Christianity of the *fear of God*, First, by transferring much of the worship due to the Creator upon the creature, in their idolatrous adoration of dead men; by whose merits and mediation the anger of the offended Deity is supposed to be appeased, and the unalterable terms of justice, between God and man, removed or relaxed: The very same idolatry, which, the Apostle *Paul* assures us, had banished all *fear* of the Deity out of the Pagan world, when the *wrath of God was revealed* by Jesus *from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*. That is, who mixed with their knowledge of the true God, the most abominable idolatries, and changed his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, &c. A practice, which, if it begins not in a contempt of the Deity, must necessarily end in it, and take away all *fear of God's JEALOUSY*.

A second way, in which *Popery* takes away the *fear of God*, is in its doctrine and discipline of penitence. We are taught, as well by nature as the Gospel, that sin is so offensive to God's purity as to *provoke his wrathful indignation* upon transgressors. Hence, the *fear of God's* displeasure tends to keep men in their duty; and to call them back to it, when they have transgressed, by a seasonable repentance.

Now, in the *church of Rome*, the doctrine of attrition with absolution roots out all this holy *fear*, by teaching men, that an ill-spent life is to be attoned by simple sorrow, and the priest's forgiveness, at the hour of death: Whereby, all *fear of God's* JUSTICE becomes evaded.

A third way, by which *Popery* takes away the *fear of God*, is in transferring his rule and government in the Church, upon a mere man, assuming to himself all power both in heaven and in earth. And he administers this power with the same extravagant impiety with which he usurped it; by giving indulgences to sin, and dispensations from the most solemn obligations of morality. So that such an exercise of Church Authority cannot but work out of the minds of men all *fear of God's* DOMINION.

A fourth way, by which *Popery* takes away the *fear of God*, is in its tyranny over conscience, called submission to the *Holy See*. It is the Gospel-doctrine, that God alone is the Judge of conscience; that it is accountable only to him; and that to bring it before another Tribunal is to usurp upon the rights of the Divinity. For *who art thou*, says the Apostle Paul, *that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth*. Yet hath this unchristian Church, in defiance of the *divine*, and in opposition to the maxims of *human* laws, erected a COURT OF INQUISITION, which imprisons, starves, and burns all who set not their opinions by those of the *Holy See*. Now, amongst the numerous evils of this infernal butchery, this is not the least, that it has a natural tendency to root out all *fear of God*: For Hypocrisy (which is the only genuine offspring of Force) familiarizing its mask to the face of Heaven, soon

soon wears out of the mind all *fear of the divine OMNISCIENCE*, intent only on deceiving these more dreaded tyrants over conscience.

Thus we see, by how many various ways the *fear of God*, which is the soul of piety, is weakened and rendered void by this daring Impostor, who usurps the reverend name of the *holy catholic Church*.

Its inseparable companion, DESPOTIC POWER, which generally follows it, but now, indeed, seems to lead the way, under its most hideous form of a bloody and unnatural rebellion, tends equally to destroy all *honour* due to *Kings*.

Let us consider from whence the *honour* due to that sacred character is naturally derived: and how inevitably arbitrary power tendeth to destroy it.

The first ground of *honour* is, that a KING, who considers the people, as his CHILDREN, of his family and household, is incessantly employed in feeding, supporting, and enriching those committed to his care. So that gratitude, which requires all the returns of filial duty and affection, gives him *honour, as to a common father*. On the other hand, a TYRANT, who regards his subjects as his SLAVES, born for the gratification of all his impotent purposes, is only solicitous how to make the most of their blood and sweat: the fruits of which he squanders away in wild projects of depopulating ambition, or in his more destructive habits of luxury and pleasure: So that, instead of *honour*, his actions repay him with deserved aversion and CONTEMPT.

Another ground of *honour* is the equal protection a *King* affords to all his subjects; not suffering his people to be oppressed in their religious rights by cruel or intolerant Churchmen; or, in their civil, by proud and overbearing Nobles; which gives him *honour as their common protector*. The *Tyrant*, on the contrary, who wants the assistance of Superstition to support his illegal prerogative, and the connivance of the Powerful, in the unjust exercise of it; delivers up his people, for a prey to Both; that himself may direct and

prefide in the common pillage; which must needs turn all esteem and *honour* into hatred and DETESTATION.

Another ground of *honour* is, that the rule which the King prescribes to the exercise of his power is the old, established, and well known Laws of the realm; by which the people are secured in the freedom of their persons, and in the enjoyment of their possessions. Hence the *King becomes honoured as the common judge*, the avenger of wrong and oppression. On the other hand, the *Tyrant*, by making his *will and pleasure* the rule of his administration, imprisons and confiscates without legal complaint or forfeiture; which, exposing liberty and property a prey to court sycophants, reduces all *honour* to a SERVILE FEAR.

The last ground of *honour* is, the *King's* owning himself created by the People, and for their sake\*: The end of his office, being the public good: So that he is *honoured by them as their common benefactor*. A *Tyrant*, on the contrary, claims his right from Heaven, or Nature, or Conquest, or, in a word, from any thing, rather than that from whence only a free obedience can arise; and consequently holds the People made for the gratification of his pleasure, and the support of his magnificence; and that, when he condescends to employ himself in their service, 'tis merely of his princely grace and favour; which turns all *honour* into jealousy and DISTRUST.

Thus, here again, we see, how *arbitrary power*, so essentially different from our happy Constitution, deprives the Magistrate of all civil honour, by making him unworthy of it; and leaving nothing in its place but contempt, aversion, jealousy, and slavish fear.

When we are therefore bid by the Apostle PETER to *honour the King*, we must conclude, he previously supposes, that we have had the courage to procure for ourselves such a Constitution as

\* Rex detur propter regnum, et non regnum propter Regem. Fortescue, de Laud. Leg. Ang. c. 37.

establistheth a *King worthy of honour*; or, at least, that we have the grace to preserve and support what our ancestors' courage hath procured for us. For if, where the Apostle bids us *fear God*, he means that we should adhere to the great Lord and Governor of the universe, in opposition to those dumb idols, which it was the purpose of *Gospel-holiness* to root out; then certainly, where he bids us *honour the King*, he must needs mean a legitimate Magistrate, in opposition to a lawless Tyrant, so contrary to the true spirit of *gospel-liberty*. And St. PAUL, where he exhorts men to civil obedience, defines this lawful Magistrate to be one, who *beareth not the sword in vain—A terror not to good works but to the evil—A minister of God to us for good—An avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*: the very description of our own constitutional Monarch. In a word, If it were the intent of the Holy Spirit, in the precept of *fearing God*, that we should support Religion in the purity of the Gospel: then certainly it was his intent, in the precept of *honouring the King*, to recommend to us a legal Government, which only can support Religion in that purity.

Hence we see, that to *fear God and honour the King* is, in other words, to support our holy Religion against *popish Superstition*; and our equable government against *Arbitrary power*. Precepts never out of season to recommend to free Men and Christians: but, in this time of public danger, when both are so insolently threatened, and, in them, every thing that is dear and valuable to honest men, the duty of our ministry calls upon us, with all our power, to in-force them.

If therefore, my Brethren, you have yet in your hearts any sentiments of true Religion, any feeling for the love of your Country; if you be *Christians* any more than by profession; if you be *Britons* any more than by name; if you have the piety, as well as reason of Protestants; if you have the virtue, as well as the rights and privileges of Free-men; you will now *stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has set you free*, and in which the Holy Spirit, by my text, exhorts you to persevere.

You

You will drive far, from you the yoke of *Rome*, now ready to be once more cast about your necks. A yoke, which your forefathers could not bear, even when use had made it habitual; and ignorance had shut them up from the sight of Truth and Liberty. But You, who have a clear view, as well as a free choice, of good and evil, will doubtless prefer Gospel light to the Anti-christian kingdom of darkness. You will, doubtless, prefer liberty of conscience to blind obedience, or the dungeons and fires of an Inquisition; You will prefer piety to superstition, virtue to fanaticism, your Bible to the mass-book, and sense to nonsense.

You will employ all your virtue to oppose the insults of *France*, which your forefathers, at all times, so well knew how to repel: You will rather chuse to trust your liberties and properties to laws of your own making, than to be beholden, for the precarious enjoyment of them, to the *good will and pleasure* of that monster in the creation, that despoiler of God's Works, an arbitrary and an unlimited Master.

In a word, would you aspire to be virtuous; would you be willing to be thought religious; would you continue to be happy here, or would you entertain hopes of happiness hereafter; you must now, all of you, in your several stations, concur to the vigorous support of that glorious Constitution to which you have the honour to belong: The pride and confidence of our friends! The envy of our Neighbours! The terror of our enemies, and the admiration of mankind! Happy nation! the nurse of heroes, the school of sages, the seminary of holy martyrs, the distinguished favorite of Heaven! But how momentary are all these blessings, when freedom is once separated, and divorced from virtue! for, according to the generous saying of an ancient free-man, *That very day which sees a man a slave takes away half his virtue*. But, above all, let me remind the benevolent man, that though we ourselves be the first and greatest, yet we shall not be the only sufferers by so terrible a reverse. The effects of it will be felt

felt by the remotest nations. *Britain* hath now the distinguished glory of being the Depositary, as it were, of civil and religious Freedom, for the rest of mankind: And while we continue faithful to our trust, there are still hopes that the degenerate sons of men may, some time or other, catch this noble fire from us, and vindicate their ravaged birth-right. But, in our destruction, Liberty itself expires; and human nature will despair of evermore regaining its first and original dignity.

These indeed are motives consecrated to such only whom the sacred spirit of Liberty inspires. However, if these be too exalted for the times of a general luxury and corruption (the unhappy effects of ill-used freedom) there are yet other considerations, and such as are abundantly sufficient, to animate those who have not lost all sense of Manhood, along with their Virtue and Religion.

For when ever had an *Englishman* higher cause of resentment, than at present, when he sees *Spain*, whose impotency we have long despised, and *France*, whose violence we have never failed to repell, presume to impose, upon a powerful Nation, a mean, servile, tributary Tyrant; and to attempt the dethroning an illustrious Family, raised by Providence, for the Head of the Protestant interest abroad; and appointed by a willing People, the Protector of *British* liberty, at home?

But, what so just an indignation may fail to effect, the secret sense of ignominy and dishonour will amply supply. Should we not blush to have it said, that a mighty Kingdom, a People that still gives laws to the Main, and has long held the balance of Power between contending Empires, was suddenly overturned by a rabble of superstitious ruffians, of mountain robbers, of half-armed and half-starved barbarians, with a wild and desperate Adventurer at their head; and reduced, by the madness of these miserable varlets, from the most free and happy people upon earth, to be a Province to *France*, a Warehouse to *Spain*, and a patrimony to the pretended successor

successor of St. *Peter* ? The very thought of so amazing a dishonour is enough to cover us with confusion. And certainly, if ever this dishonour should befall us, the most inclement, the most inhospitable of our *American* Plantations, would be far too good for us to run into, and hide our coward heads : There we might waste our wretched days ; still more imbibed with this cruel reflection, That when LIBERTY, now driven from the Continent, had retired for refuge, and taken shelter, in *Great Britain*, we were unable to stay her parting footsteps, though she brought with her all her dowry of religious, of civil, and of social Virtues.

And now, if happily this consideration be but of power to kindle again any of the seeds of old *English* valour, they may be easily excited and blown into a flame by a virtuous emulation of our brave and generous Ancestors : The first in *Europe* who shook off that very Superstition and Tyranny with which we are now insulted ; and ever after, with the utmost vigour, repelled all the wicked attempts for their re-establishment : But never with so great hazard and expence as against that infatuated Family from whence this Pretender boasts to have had his birth, and from whence he derives his imaginary title, founded on I know not what jargon of indefeasible hereditary Right for the King, and passive-obedience and non-resistance for the Subject : A title, which the much provoked resentment of an injured People hath long since with the highest justice dissolved and abrogated.

Nor should *Gratitude* lose its share in waking us from our fatal slumber of luxury and pleasure. The blessings those brave men purchased for us are inestimable, and the price they paid for them was immense. So that the warmest return of gratitude is due to the *Manes* of our Benefactors. Let us pay it in that way which most becomes us, and would best please them ; a vigorous exertion of all our faculties to preserve the blessings they have procured for us.

But if neither shame nor gratitude can work upon us to venture any thing for the keeping ourselves free and happy, yet, at least,  
*natural*

*natural affection*, and pity for our Posterity, (the last bar to ignominy in the absence of virtue) should make us either resolve to die bravely, or to deliver down unimpaired to our children that glorious heritage which our provident fore-fathers bequeathed to them, through us. And not suffer our cowardice or indolence, at this important juncture, to hazard the intailing upon our wretched offspring a long series of ignorance, superstition, want, servility, and all the miseries and distresses which attend *arbitrary government*, and *Papal communion*.

But if it be the unhappy fate of *England* that no generous motive, worthy the breasts of men and citizens, can make impression on her sons, now become insensible through sloth and luxury, They may yet, nay They should be applied unto, as Slaves, and awakened with the servile dread of punishment: A punishment as great as it is inevitable! The divine vengeance pursuing them at heels, for their violated oaths and perfidious engagements; when in the face of Heaven, by the most sacred office of Religion, they invoked God as a witness and avenger, and swore allegiance to his excellent Majesty KING GEORGE. For natural Religion will teach us, though we throw off all reverence for the Revealed, that no crime is more offensive to the great God of Truth than the breach of public oaths. And civil History will inform you, that none is so speedily and severely punished: A punishment, most becoming the justice of Heaven. For the sanction of an Oath was the only means, amongst equals, of bringing men into Society; and is still the only means of keeping Societies entire.

But I trust, that neither Virtue nor Religion will be wanting, on this great occasion, to repel the storm now gathered over us; how much soever the state of both may need amendment. In conclusion, therefore, let me recommend it to men in all stations, as one of the most general and efficacious means for the successful discharge of their duty to the King and Government, religiously to implore a long forgotten succour, laughed at by most, and scarce

trusted to by any, *The assistance of God's Holy Spirit*, to warm our Affections, to purify our Hearts, to enlighten our Understandings, to strengthen our Wills, and to supply all the weaknesses and defects of our corrupted Nature ; to the glory of God's holy Name, and the good and happiness of Mankind.

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A  
S E R M O N  
O N T H E  
G E N E R A L F A S T D A Y,

December 18, 1745.

Preached and published while the Rebel-army  
was in England.

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## S E R M O N II.

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JOEL II. ver. 20.

I WILL REMOVE FAR OFF FROM YOU THE NORTHERN ARMY,  
AND WILL DRIVE HIM INTO A LAND BARREN AND DESOLATE.

**G**OD, by the prophet JOEL, having denounced against a sinful People, the invasion of the *Affyrians*, together with the fore-runners of that judgement, his *army of locusts*; at the same time, declares, that, on their true repentance, he would drive the Invaders back again into the horrid regions from whence they came; and with a slaughter as great as their preceding ravages and desolation.

Now the apostle PAUL tells us, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope* \*: By which we understand in general, that the like disposition of humiliation before God, of hearty repentance for our sins, and sincere resolution

\* Romans xv. 4.

of amendment, are the proper means of enabling us, at this juncture, to drive back the haughty powers of *France*, which now hover over us; together with their fore-runners, this Northern army of locusts; allured hither by the scent of prey, because, as the prophet expresses it, *The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them, a desolate wilderness* \*.

Thus far human reason, the true interpreter of Scripture, will allow us to infer. But further to conclude of God's dealings with States and Societies from his dispensations to the Jewish People, will be the occasion of our turning that Scripture, which, the Apostle here tells us, was *written for our learning and instruction*, to our delusion and ruin. Yet, from this character given of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in several places of the Scriptures of the New, men have not only ventured to regulate God's proceeding with Particulars, but also to judge of the fate of Kingdoms and Societies, by his administration of the *Jewish* Nation. This hath been the source of numberless superstitions. Some of which dishonour Religion, by derogating from the justice of God: while others weaken and distract Government, by violating the rights of men. And all of them defeat the rational conclusions of that *learning* and instruction which may be found in Scripture; and which is *able to make us wise unto salvation*. In the number of these superstitions is the popular opinion, That God, in the common government of the world, punisheth children for the crimes of their parents: A dispensation peculiar to the *Jewish* Nation; and there indeed administered with the highest equity †: but, in the present order of things, not to be employed without impinging on God's justice. So again, that other absurd fancy, which transfers to modern Kings the title peculiar to the *Jewish*, of the *LORD'S ANOINTED*: equally violates the rights of Men. For to resist the *Lord's anointed*, who was God's Deputy or Lieutenant in his kingdom, was rebellion against God. Hence court flatterers, when

\* Joel ii. 3.

† See Divine Legation, Book V.

they had given the title to modern Kings, did not rest till they had invested them with the prerogatives of it likewise. And from thence inferred their divine Right, and the people's unlimited Obedience. Whereas, had this title, which belonged to the Jewish Kings in a literal and real sense, been applied, as it ought, to our Monarchs, in a figurative and accommodated meaning, it had been of excellent use to instruct the People in the sacred character of every legitimate Magistrate; the resisting of whose ordinances is, indeed, the resisting the ordinance of God.

But another place may be more proper to go through the many various errors and superstitions, which have arisen, in these latter ages, from a misapplication to the Men and Societies of the world at large, of the Principles and Providences on which the *Jewish* state was formed and conducted. It shall suffice at present, that I have just pointed out their nature and consequences; and shewn how they arise from an apostolical declaration ill understood; *that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*, which, when rightly interpreted, yield that *patience and comfort*, St. Paul speaks of, as the genuine fruits of Christian *hope*. Let us distinguish, therefore, and always have in mind, that the DOCTRINAL points of the Old Testament were written for our *belief*; the MORAL parts for the regulation of our *conduct*; and the DEVOTIONAL for the exercise of our *piety*. This will lead us to St. Paul's true meaning, where he says, *All scripture is written by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness* \*. But then, as to the greater part of the Volume of the Old Testament, that which is HISTORICAL, and gives account of the Laws and Fortunes of the Jewish Republic, it was written for our *information*, concerning the general œconomy of God's dispensation to mankind; of which the divine establishment and administration of that Commonwealth makes a considerable part. A RELIGIOUS POLICY added, as the Apostle says, or thrust

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

in, between the PATRIARCHAL and CHRISTIAN Dispensations, *because of transgressions*; and to preserve the memory of the true God, in an idolatrous world, *till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made* \*. For this end, God saw fit to erect that State into a THEOCRACY, properly so called; in which he himself was the supreme civil Magistrate.

The consequences of which form of Government were these: 1. That it was administered by the exertion of an *extraordinary* providence. 2. That Religion and civil Society were thoroughly *incorporated*. 3. That Religion had a *public*, as well as a *private* part; the subject of it being as well the State collectively, as individuals separately. And, 4. That the sanctions both of religion and society were *temporal* rewards and punishments. Of all this, that is to say, of the expediency and even necessity of such a form of Policy, for the carrying on the great ends of God's moral government of the world, and the natural consequences arising from it, I have elsewhere discoursed at large †.

Now from the *first* circumstance, the exertion of an *extraordinary* providence, it follows, that we are not to regulate our ideas of God's dealing with us, as a State or Nation, by his administration of the *Jewish Theocracy*; Mankind being now under a *common*, not an *extraordinary* providence: I mean, it follows, we are not to expect it in the DEGREE; though, indeed, from this circumstance, nothing hinders but we might expect it in the *kind*.

But then from the other *three* it follows, that we are not to expect it, even so much as in the *KIND*. For Religion, among the *Jews*, was incorporated with their Society, and had a *PUBLIC* part: Hence *Impiety*, when it abounded, became a public crime; and, as such, was, from time to time, severely punished on the State. But, the *Christian Religion* hath no public part; hath not the State, as such, but individuals only, for its subject. Hence *Impiety* is not now a *public*, but a *private* crime: For which, the offender will

\* Gal. iii. 19.

† Divine Legation, Book V. Sect. ii.

doubtless

doubtless be severely punished, but his punishment shall be according to the rules of the Gospel dispensation.

Again, the *Jewish* sanctions were TEMPORAL only; which made it fit, and sometimes *necessary*, that the crimes, even of private men, should have their punishment inflicted on the State, as by that means condign misery was derived on particulars. But the sanctions of our religion are *future rewards and punishments*; for the latter of which, impious and wicked men are properly reserved; and therefore, there is not the same expediency in punishing them *through* the State.

This then, to which numberless other considerations might be added, is sufficient to shew, that we have no real authority from *Scripture*, when interpreted on the principles of human reason, to conclude, that God's dealing with the *Jewish* people is the measure of administering his providence over other States: Or that, because the PRIVATE vices and impieties of men under that œconomy have, by the just judgement of God, often brought distress upon the COMMUNITY, that they have now the same tendency to provoke his wrath and indignation against ours.

This I presume to be a fair representation of this important subject: And I hope, it will not be judged unreasonable in a time of general danger; when, though the ill state of our moral condition should not be kept hid from us, yet methinks it ought not to be aggravated by discouraging examples drawn from those dreadful judgements inflicted on the *Jewish* nation: A parallel much insisted on; but not with that exactness which the dignity of the sacred Writings demands, or the crisis of our present Disorders seems to require; when every good man will deserve the public thanks, *Quod de republica non desperasset.*

But it will be asked, "Are not vice and impiety the certain destruction of Communities? And are not Communities the subject of God's mercies and judgements?" My answer is in the affirmative: And it will serve to support what hath been already said, concerning that crude, inconclusive Divinity, which makes God's

dealing with the *Jews* the model of his Providence in the world at large. It will, at the same time, explain and clear up what may be further obnoxious to objection or misinterpretation.

To the first of these questions, therefore, I say, that where, in defining the nature of the *Jewish* Commonwealth, I spoke of God's national judgements on his *chosen People*, for their impieties, I used the exact and philosophic language of a Divine; and meant those *consequences* of wrong which follow from the *will of God*; not the *effects* which arise from the *nature of things*. Rewards and punishments of the first kind are those only which revealed Religion acknowledgeth for the sanction of its precepts: though platonic preachers, in their moral harangues, may have been accustomed, by a *latitude* of expression, to call the mischiefs arising naturally, out of moral evil, by the name of *God's judgements*. Which, perhaps, would scarce deserve notice, were they not accustomed likewise to confound These with the judgements of God, *properly so called*; to the great injury, as I think, of revealed Religion, for reasons too long and too intricate to be here assigned. Now, as to the natural issue of vice and impiety, nothing can be more certain than that they are the inevitable ruin of a Commonwealth. For IMPIETY, which consists in a contempt of the sanctions of Religion, removeth the first and strongest pillar of Society, the fear of divine punishment, for falsehood and wrong. From hence ariseth a disregard to the *outward tye of oaths*, the great security of the MAGISTRATE; and a disregard to the *inward tye of conscience*, the great security of the PEOPLE. As *impiety* undermines society, so VICE more openly attacks it. But both with the same fatal success. The epidemic evils of every powerful Community in its decline, are LUXURY and AVARICE: Which, by an unnatural mixture, are incessantly begetting one another even in the same breast. By these means, the NATIONAL WEALTH, one of our main strengths against foreign invasions, becomes in part *exhausted*; and, which is almost as bad, in part, *unequally distributed*: And the PERSONAL VIGOUR of the people, which makes the other, is either enervated by opulence mis-

misemployed, or debased by sordid and inactive poverty. But to reckon up the train of evils, which issue from these two master-vices, would be an endless task. Let it suffice to say, that these are the evils which fill private Families with unnatural quarrels; infest the Courts of justice with chicane; and distract the councils of Government with faction. FACTION, which accumulates all the evils of dissention in one; and fraught with the dispositions of the worst citizens, impudently pretends to all the qualities of the best. FACTION, which scruples no shape however venerable, no name however sacred, to draw the deluded People to second her private and corrupt purposes, masked over with pious zeal for Religion, and disinterested love of our Country.

But then if the evils of *impiety* and *vice* be, separately, so destructive to a Public; How malignant must they prove, when they act in concert? as they always do, when they exist together. For prophaneness gives an edge and keenness to immorality; and immorality claps on a leaden bias to the mind, which accelerates its growing aversion to Religion.

However secure, therefore, the PUBLIC may be from apprehending the *judgements of God* for the iniquity of particulars, yet we see it has every thing to fear, from *the nature of things*. A case, which when arrived to a certain point, admits even of less hope than the other. For God, whose mercies are over all his works, frequently withholds the evils of his positive judgements from sinful man; but never reverses the order of Nature to embolden him in his wickedness. Yet we have this consolation at least, that, though such destruction be sure, it is still in our power to avert it. It is only resolving on a speedy course of sobriety, justice, and piety: By which, as kingdoms become great, so by that only can they remain secure. For, as in the natural body, an athletic habit, acquired by abstinence and exercise, can never be preserved by intemperance and sloth; so a body politic become powerful by the

modest parsimony, by the virtue and religion of its citizens, can never support its power by their luxury, injustice, and impiety.

We come now to the second question, “Whether STATES, as well as PRIVATE MEN, may not be the subject of divine displeasure, so as to bring down its severest judgments upon them?” To which we reply, that Nothing is more certain. A Society is an *artificial man*, having like the *natural*, all those essential qualities, which constitute a MORAL AGENT; The discernment of good and evil; A will to chuse, and a power to put its choice in execution. Hence the rules of civil justice, in the intercourse between nation and nation, are the very same, as those, in a state of nature, between man and man. And accordingly we find (for here Scripture comes in again *for our learning*) that God dealt with the *Jewish* nation under this idea. And though his *particular contract* with it will not suffer us to collect, a mode of providence over others, similar to what was administered amongst them; yet his entering at all into *contract* shews that states are considered, and will be dealt with by him as MORAL AGENTS.

We must needs therefore conclude, both from *Revelation* and *Reason*, that the hand of Heaven distributes good and evil to Societies, according to their merit or undesert: Not upon that fancy, that as States are only *artificial beings* with a present existence, and incapable of a future, therefore God is obliged in justice to punish and reward them HERE. This is a mere school invention, and confuted by the general history of the moral world: Where, we find indeed many signal examples of the divine vengeance inflicted upon States and Communities; yet, generally, at such a distance from the crime, that the punishment is not *identical*, as according to this learned fancy it ought to be: for the *sanieness* is not real or natural, but nominal and artificial only. Again, according to this doctrine, the administration should be constant and exact, failing in no instance, nor defective in any degree. Whereas we have many examples in States as well as private men, where iniquity hath ab-

solutely

folutely escaped the rod of divine vengeance. From all this we conclude, that, not for the fantastic reason here confuted, but for one far more weighty and substantial, SOCIETIES are punished or rewarded according to their behaviour ; a reason worthy the dominion of the great Lord of the universe, That is to say, For example, and to keep alive the sense of God's providence, in a careless and impious world.

It remains, therefore, only to consider what those actions of Society are, which we suppose to be the objects of divine favour or displeasure : Now these (in a Society, like our own, established on a system of Laws which secure reverence to the Deity, and impose due restraint on vice and immorality) can be evidently nothing else than the observance or neglect of GOOD FAITH, justice, and equity in the transactions of one of these communities towards all others. By this test, therefore, we might well consent that *Great Britain* should be tried to the utmost ; tried even by her enemies. When it would be clearly seen whether, in her collective capacity, she deserves, or has just reason to fear that impending vengeance, from the hand of Heaven, with which, in a time so critical, good men may be but too apt to terrify themselves and others.

In all our national transactions since the REVOLUTION to these times, *Great Britain* has been so unfashionably tenacious of the public faith, and so generously intent on the good of *Europe*, that we have never passed for Politicians amongst those who are most famed for their science in the mysteries of State. And as to the war which we are at present engaged in ; though the corrupt interests of Private Men, of Trading-bodies, and of State-parties amongst us may have all concurred to push us forward ; yet a common observation is sufficient to satisfy you, that it was first begun against SPAIN, for satisfaction of real injuries, which they had owned, acknowledged ; and in public convention contracted to repair. But, encouraged by our unhappy divisions, the agreement was unjustly violated, as soon, almost, as it was made. In this quarrel we were *principals*. An *auxiliary* war, in which the PUBLIC

FAITH called upon us to engage, followed, in support of the house of AUSTRIA, taken at advantage, and against all the spirit of treaties cruelly attacked and plundered. Both these together soon produced a *defensive* war against FRANCE; whose restless ambition (essential to her Constitution) seizing every favourable conjuncture of advancing that idol of her politics, the giving law to *Europe*, now supported *Spain*, to persist in denying to do us justice, and encouraged the other enemies of the house of *Austria* to join her in their ungenerous depredations. And all this with an apparent design to break that established and equitable balance of Power, so necessary for the peace and felicity of *Europe*: Which when she found us resolved to maintain, she publicly denounced war against us in all its forms.

This is a true state of the public quarrel; of our share in it; and of our conduct with regard to all our neighbours. Now what is there in all this, that shall make us afraid to appeal for aid and protection to the tribunal of eternal justice?

If reparation, by the sword, for national injuries, after all the ways of peace had been tried in vain; If the discharge of public faith, when solemnly demanded, in behalf of a confederate Power, most cruelly oppressed; If self-defence against those who openly set themselves to defeat the honest purposes which Justice called upon us to discharge; If, lastly, the support of the established balance of power, that is, of the liberties of *Europe*, against the most detestable perfidy, the most unjust usurpations, and the most lawless and destructive ambition; If, I say, all, or any of these, may intitle us to the protection of Heaven, we seem to have the best grounded expectations for its declaring in our favour.

This public act of humiliation before God is therefore enjoined with a modesty and holy confidence, not always observed by AUTHORITY on these occasions: Where, with an impiety that makes sober men astonished, the tremendous Majesty of Heaven is too often mocked and insulted, by invoking its blessings on the arms of fraud,

fraud, rapine, and injustice. But, blessed be God ! GREAT BRITAIN hath now a CAUSE, for which it may not only with decency supplicate the protection, but with confidence appeal to the justice of Heaven : a *cause* founded on the solid basis of SELF-DEFENCE, PUBLIC FAITH, and the LIBERTIES OF MANKIND ; all nobly vindicated in a just and necessary war.

There is only one impediment to the happy issue of our appeal ; and that is the PRIVATE vices and impieties of the People : And to remove this, was the purpose of this solemn Act of devotion ; in which we are called upon by our gracious *Sovereign* (ever intent upon our welfare) to humble ourselves before the avenging hand of God, and to deprecate his Judgements, by a free confession of our sins, and a determined purpose of amendment.

I have shewn you how certain and inevitable a destruction vice and IMPIETY always bring upon a People. If this be not sufficient to induce you to a speedy reformation, think upon the consequence of persisting in them at this juncture ; when, by suspending the protection of Providence, which, as a Community, I have shewn, we have just reason to expect, we hasten, by a stroke from Heaven, that ruin, which is more slowly advancing from the nature of things. So that, in our instant resolves, not only our *future* welfare, a matter of infinite importance, which we have in common with all men, but our *present*, is eminently concerned. The enjoyment of all that is dear and valuable to men, depending on the preservation of our happy Constitution, more shaken by our intestine vices, than by the arms of its degenerate and rebellious Citizens, now audaciously advanced into the very heart of the Kingdom.

Let us then, in good earnest, resolve upon a thorough Reformation ; A return to that gracious simplicity of manners ; that amiable modesty in dress and diet ; that temperance in pleasures ; that justice in business ; which made BRITAIN so distinguished in the manly annals of our forefathers. Let us speedily return to that  
sober:

sober piety, that serious sense of Religion, by which our Ancestors were encouraged to form, and enabled to support, the PRINCIPLES on which this happy Constitution is erected. But above all, as the first step into the old paths of honour, let us emancipate ourselves from that detestable spirit of libertinism, impudently assuming the name of FREETHINKING; the bane of common life, the opprobrium of common sense, and the dishonour even of our common humanity. Let us but be instant in doing this, and we shall soon have earth and heaven once more in conjunction, to make us happy and victorious over all the confederated enemies of our peace.

## A

## D E F E N C E

## OF THE PRECEDING

## D I S C O U R S E.

**A** Free and equal Government is the greatest temporal blessing the Almighty ever bestowed upon mankind. Such an one, in his great mercy, he bestowed on us; of which we were in full possession, when a vile unnatural rebellion, supported by the most formidable Power in *Europe*, threatened to overturn it; and on its ruins, to erect a civil and ecclesiastic tyranny; the most detested evil wherewith God, in his wrath, ever permitted the enemy of mankind to deform the fair work of creation.

. At this important juncture, when no human means, sufficient to save us, were at hand, but our determined courage to live and die with the Constitution, I observed some good men were apt to terrify themselves and others with an apprehension, that the *private* vices of the people had brought down this judgement of God, upon the **PUBLIC**, which it was to be feared must end in its destruction. Into this kind of Divinity I supposed them to be led by the consideration of God's dealing with the **JEWISH PEOPLE**; on whom, in the magnificence of his royal bounty, he had graciously bestowed the most excellent of all civil governments; subjected, however, to destruction in punishment for their *irreligious practices*.

At this juncture, a fast-day being appointed by authority, to implore God's blessings, and to deprecate his judgements, I understood it to be my duty, on such an occasion, both as a minister of God's word, and a subject of the King, to examine into the reasonableness of these apprehensions; and to shew, to those committed to my care, what they had indeed to trust to.

In the first place, therefore, I endeavoured to prove, that the case of the Jewish People could not, for many reasons, be brought into example: That the method of Providence, there administered, did indeed admirably fit the *Mosaic* constitution; but the Christian œconomy had revealed unto us a different way of punishing the sins of particulars: And that, on the principles of natural light, we might gather, that the punishment of a right constituted Public was due only to civil crimes; from which we being remarkably free, I concluded, that our happy constitution had great reason to expect the distinguished protection of heaven: For that it would be hard to find, throughout the history of mankind, any one State, either antient or modern, Monarchy or Republic, so long, and so eminently, distinguished for its OBSERVANCE OF PUBLIC FAITH: There being but one instance since the Revolution (at which time, our Constitution, properly, arose) where *good faith* was not most scrupulously and religiously discharged by it.

Such was the doctrine I delivered in the preceding discourse. And was it natural to think, that at such a time, and on such an occasion, it should give offence to a Divine of the Church of *England*? It did. And I was then told from the press, that "The clergy very well know, and needed not my help to inform them, that God was under a special covenant with the *Jews* for temporal good and evil. But as this covenant, whatever privileges it gave to the *Jews* above other nations, could not destroy God's right as universal governor; an argument therefore would very properly lye from God's dealing with the *Jews*, to what other nations are to expect in like cases, in such points as either reason or Scripture shew, to appertain to God's universal government;

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“ of which sort is the punishing nations and kingdoms for the  
 “ wickedness of them that dwell therein. As appears from the  
 “ FLOOD, from the case of SODOM and GOMORRAH, of the NINE-  
 “ VITES, and of those HEATHEN NATIONS whom the *Jews* were  
 “ raised up to destroy (as the Scripture expressly says) *for their*  
 “ *wickedness* \*.”

The pernicious doctrine to be confuted, we see, was this, “ That  
 “ God, in his common government of the world, doth not deprive  
 “ nations of that greatest blessing he ever bestowed upon them, a  
 “ *free and equal Government*, for the vices of *particulars*.” This  
 position, I supported on our *natural* notions of God’s providence;  
 and on what we find *revealed* of his moral government in Scrip-  
 ture. In the first, the Objector was silent: In the second (where  
 I considered the *Jewish* government as the only case that could  
 seem to support the contrary opinion), he supplies my omissions:  
 and urges me with God’s judgements on the *people at the flood, on*  
*Sodom and Gomorrah*, the *Ninevites*, and the *seven nations*.

But amongst all these, I could not find one *free and equal govern-  
 ment*; for which, only, I undertake to be an advocate; and there-  
 fore they were omitted. Some of them were uncivilized tribes,  
 living in a state of nature, in which there was *no* blessing of Govern-  
 ment to take away: And others, in a still viler condition, the  
 slaves of petty tyrannies, where the destruction of the State was  
 the removal of God’s severest curse. In a word, I was speaking  
 of the greatest human happiness hostilely attacked, and in danger  
 of being lost. And the Objector confutes my doctrine, by instances  
 of the greatest human misery occasionally removed: The destruc-  
 tion of the noble Constitutions of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; to which,  
 not over decently, he thought fit to compare the free Government  
 of *Great Britain*. I was speaking, and speaking only, of a CON-  
 STITUTION, of a COUNTRY, where civil and religious liberty  
 flourished at their height. I never concerned myself, how God  
 would deal with a rabble of savages: nor thought it worth while to

\* Hist. of Abraham, &c. p. 100.

consider, what kind of a punishment it was, to those who groaned under it, to overthrow a tyranny. I regarded those illustrious Societies as hardly coming into account, when God, in his justice, weighs the fate of nations.

“ \* But Mr. *W.* (says the objector) who loves to be by himself, “ after having retailed to us the principles of *The Divine Legislation*, “ comes to this conclusion, diametrically opposite to the sense of “ his brethren, and I believe of all Christian divines from *St. Paul* “ to this day, *viz.* that *we have no warrant to conclude, that because “ the private vices and impieties of men under the JEWISH OECONOMY, “ by the just judgement of God, frequently brought amazing destruction “ on their nation, that it has now the self-same tendency to provoke his “ wrath against OURS.*” This I should have thought might have set the Objector right; and have shewn him, that I confined my doctrine to the blessing of a *free and equal* government, when I considered none other than the JEWISH and OUR OWN. But he seems to mean well, and to be much embarrassed: Let us try to help him out.

The temporal punishments, which God inflicts upon iniquity, have three objects. *Particulars*; a *People*; and a *State or Government*. The punishment of the two first Objects, I hold to be inflicted for the *CRIMES OF MEN*; the latter only for the *CRIMES OF THE STATE*. The subject of my sermon was concerning the punishment of *legitimate States, as such*. The particular case confined me to this consideration; the imminent danger of our happy Establishment from a powerful body of rebels, which, at the moment of my writing, had penetrated, without controul, to the very centre of the kingdom. With God’s punishment for the sins of particulars, by, what may be called, the *national judgments* of famine, pestilence, or any other way that hurts not the *Constitution*, my subject was not concerned. In this, as much a lover of singularity as he is pleased to represent me, I believe with my *brethren*. I believe these judgments to be sent for the sins of private men;

\* Hist. of Abraham, &c. p. 101.]

but so restrained, as not to hurt that great gift of God, a free and equal Government: For here I stop; and still affirm, that if a State be a MORAL AGENT, its actions, *as such*, are those only which make it *accountable*: God, according to my theology, never depriving us of a blessing, he hath been pleased to bestow, till that blessing hath been abused. The very case of the Mosaic œconomy, which so much misleads the Objector, might, if he had attended to plain facts, have set him right. He might have seen, that, in this Dispensation, if a Particular transgressed in his Ceremonial observances, divine punishment pursued Particulars. When the body of the People disused or had corrupted the holy Ritual, the body of the People suffered. But it was IDOLATRY only which brought destruction on the Republic. For *Idolatry* was the introducing another *Law*; which was *high treason*: it was the transferring their *obedience* from their Supreme Magistrate; which was *rebellion*: Crimes deservedly punished by subjection to a foreign yoke. And this punishment was inflicted on the State at different periods, both under the administration of their Judges and their Kings. Its last final Overthrow was attended with a general dispersion which subsists to this very day. And the crime, as the punishment, was the same. For the rejection of the Messiah was a species of this *Treason* and *Rebellion*. *Idolatry* set aside the *Law*; and *Rejection of the Son of God* was setting aside their *supreme Magistrate*, on whom the Father had devolved his Kingly rule and Government. In a word, though the Jewish State was frequently overturned for what are no *crimes of State with us*, yet it never suffered for what were no *crimes of State with them*. And this may serve to obviate the charge of Contradiction, which the Objector brings against me, for supposing the *People* are punished for *private Sins*; and yet denying that the *State* incurs the danger of God's judgements for any thing but *public crimes*.

Had the Objector considered all this, and it lay as open to his consideration as it did to mine, his Monsters, both before, and after the flood, might have been well spared: His *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*,  
his

his *Ninevites*, and the *Seven nations*. Just as pertinent, on this occasion, as the giants *Gog-magog* and *Coryneus*. Having said thus much for the *truth* of my doctrine; One word, if it may be done without offence, concerning its *expediency*. This will be best seen by considering what must be the natural conduct of a good man, on the principles of the Objector, in a State (which he compares to *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*) when so imminently threatened as ours was at the time of my preaching this sermon. Must not such a one, all these circumstances concurring, think us a devoted people? And would he not, in mere piety, deem it a struggling against God when he fought for the Constitution. What encouragement would be now left him for the discharge of his duty as a Citizen? He is supposed to measure every thing by the Jewish standard. He knows what character history has transmitted to us of those Zealots for their country, who so long opposed the progress of *Titus's* arms, in the last destruction of *Jerusalem*. These he finds represented as an abandoned crew of miscreants, impiously opposing the fixed destination of Providence: And is it charitable to believe that this *good Christian* of the Objector's making would dare to follow their example? Besides, on such grounds as these, what false theology could not perfect, real poltrony would supply; which, by the aid of a religious principle, would teach men to disguise their Cowardice under the specious shew of a pious resignation.

A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED ON THE  
T H A N K S G I V I N G D A Y

FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF  
THE LATE UNNATURAL REBELLION,  
IN MDCCXLVI.



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## S E R M O N III.

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2 COR. iii. 17.

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY.

**T**HIS is the character St. *Paul* gives of the GOSPEL in the purity of its profession; that it begets LIBERTY; the blessing, through which the perfection of our nature is obtained. For, by *Liberty* is to be understood that right and due exertion of our faculties which terminates in TRUTH and VIRTUE; The *Slavery* of rational creatures consisting in a subjection to *Vice* and *Error*.

The various kinds of *Liberty*, thus procured, may be the subject of some less confined Inquiry. On this occasion, I shall consider only one, but that of the nobler sort, CIVIL LIBERTY; And shew, from REASON and FACT, that, *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is this Liberty*.

### I.

1. TRUE RELIGION, delivered in the Gospel, and called in my text the SPIRIT OF THE LORD, *recommends* and encourages a LIBERTY OF ENQUIRY; and supports and *indulges* the free exercise of Conscience. But men practised in the exertion, and habituated to

the enjoyment, of these **RELIGIOUS RIGHTS**, can never long continue ignorant, or bear with patience the invasion, of their **CIVIL**. The human faculties can never long remain in so violent and unnatural a state, as to have their operations perpetually defeating one another, by the contrary actions of two such opposite Principles, as those of *freedom* and *restraint*. The one or other must, in a little time, overcome. Either the inveterate *spirit of tyranny* will viciate the purity of Religion, and introduce that blind submission of the understanding, and slavish compliance of the Will into the **CHURCH**, which it exacts in the State; Or else the *spirit of the Lord* will break down the barrier of an unequal, despotic power, and bring into the **STATE**, as well as Church, *a free and reasonable service*.

2. **TRUE RELIGION** teaches, that its *End* is the **HAPPINESS OF MAN**; in opposition to all the superstitious fancies of the *false*; which place it in the arbitrary, the selfish, or the capricious manifestation of God's power, or interest, or glory. And this naturally leading us to the *end* of civil Government, will direct us how to form a *right* Constitution, when we have, by the foregoing Principle of free inquiry, already detected the injustice of the *wrong*; which professes to make the People, for the sake of the Prince.

3. That equitable Policy, by which **TRUE RELIGION** governs in the Church (and *true*, as well as *false* Religion must always have a Church to govern) will further aid us, when we have now found the *end* of civil community, to attain the *means* likewise, by copying, in civil matters, from that ecclesiastical subordination of authority and limitation of power, where the Sovereignty resides in the whole body of the Faithful; Not, as in the administration of corrupt Religion, where a despotic Clergy constitutes the **CHURCH**.

4. But, above all, That grandeur and elevation of mind, that sublimity of sentiment, that conscious dignity of human nature, which **TRUE RELIGION** raises; which Holy Scripture dictates; and which the *Spirit of the Lord* inspires, will be ever pushing us forward to the attainment of those **CIVIL RIGHTS**, which we have  
been

been taught to know by reason, are Ours; and which, we have been made to feel by experience, of all Ours, are the most necessary to human happiness.

By these several ways, is the *Spirit of the Lord*, or TRUE RELIGION, naturally productive of the great Blessing, CIVIL LIBERTY. But turn now to the reverse of the medal; and there we shall find the antipart of this divine truth; and read in as clear characters, that, *where the Spirit of POPERY is, there is SLAVERY.*

Instead of freedom of inquiry and uncontrouled liberty of Conscience; instead of making the end of Religion human happiness; instead of an equitable administration of Church policy; instead of that elevation of mind and conscious dignity of Human nature; we are here presented with a blind submission of the understanding; with a forced compliance of the will; and with absurd and superstitious doctrines concerning God's despotic and capricious government; imitated, in its own HIERARCHY; and administered by an ambitious and corrupt Clergy, who labour to establish narrowness of thought, lowness of sentiment, and base and abject conceptions of MAN, created *after GOD's own Image.*

II. I proceed now to my second point; namely, to confirm the foregoing observations, by FACT: From which likewise it will be seen, how naturally *true* Religion is productive of civil Liberty.

1. When the fierce and free nations of the North dismembred and tore in pieces the ROMAN EMPIRE, they established themselves in their new conquests, on one common principle of policy; in which, the LIBERTY OF THE PEOPLE made, as it ought to do, the Base, and operating Power. And erected on so just a plan, these GOTHIC Governments might have stood till now, had not the rank influence of PAPAL SUPERSTITION so viciated those generous Policies, that, when the great instruments of Reformation first appeared, they saw the Western world as deeply lost in *civil*, as, in that from which they were appointed to free it, *ecclesiastic* slavery. For the triumphant *Hierarchy* had amply revenged the fallen Empire on

the necks of its destroyers. But it was now wonderful to observe, how equal a pace, the civil and the religious Reformations kept with one another. Wherever the influence of the GOSPEL reached, it never failed to redress the exorbitances of Government: While those places which continued sunk in SUPERSTITION, still groaned under the weight of civil oppression: In a word, the æra of political and religious freedom was the same: So general is the truth of my text, that, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

2. To this perhaps it may be objected, That as the Reformation of religion on the Continent was generally the work of the populace, and sometimes carried on in a very tumultuary way, it is more reasonable to ascribe the consequent regulations in the State to this lucky *circumstance* of popular fervour, than to any *natural influence* of the Gospel. But this objection will be seen to have little weight as we come nearer home: Here we shall find, that Reformation produced the same happy fruits, in *England*, where it was begun and perfected by the Prince; who can hardly be supposed to have formed designs of liberty, in favour of the People, against himself. What regulations, therefore, in the balance of power, succeeded the reformation of the Church, we must needs ascribe to the sole influence of true Religion. Now, when the first foundations of it were laid amongst ourselves, we knew little more of civil liberty than the name. For though, in *Magna Charta*, we had a kind of *Original Compact*, as the last appeal of the People; Though the historical and legal records of our Constitution declared us to be a free Nation; And though we had, from time to time, asserted our right to freedom, as in *claims at law*, to prevent forfeiture from prescription; yet was the balance of power so ill adjusted, by that undue *inclination* which SUPERSTITION had made in property; and by the more hurtful *separation* it had established between the temporal and spiritual Interests, that public liberty lay at the mercy of a Court cabal, composed of Churchmen and Ministers of state; where it had rarely room to breathe, but when the two  
interests

interests quarreled among themselves; which they never did, but when the crown refused to share the tyranny with the mitre.

Add to this, that he who fixed this foundation was a luxurious sanguinary tyrant \*; who, tricked and deluded by the Court of *Rome* in a scandalous pursuit of a papal *dispensation*, threw off in a rage the bishop of *Rome's* usurped supremacy: And, by that act, notwithstanding the accession of a NEW SUPREMACY to himself, laid the first step to the destruction of his own exorbitant power in the State. In which we can never sufficiently admire and adore the rectifying Hand of Heaven; who made arbitrary power his instrument to lay the foundations of Liberty; and employed the impious pretensions of the *Romish* see to introduce Reformation.

2. From this time of *Gospel light*, a CONSTITUTION became seen and understood: And the Church made no advance to its original purity, but the State was the better for it, in some additional security to public liberty. In a word, their interests were now found to be so inseparable, and the aid they lent each other so reciprocal, that, whenever the COMMON ENEMY formed schemes to the prejudice of the *one*, He always began with some attempts against the *other*. Thus, when the two first Princes of the house of STUART aimed at a despotic power in the State, they first endeavoured to viciate the simplicity and freedom of reformed Religion, by the pomp of *Worship*, and the servility of *papal Discipline*. And again, when the two last of that unhappy House laboured to restore the *Romish* superstition, they tried to pave the way by a *power of dispensing with the laws*.

\* —“ For Henry the Eighth; if all the pictures and patterns of a merciless prince were lost in the world, they might all again be painted to the life, out of the story of this king. How many servants did he advance in haste, but for what virtue no man could suspect; and, with the change of his fancy, ruined again, no man knowing for what offence? How many wives did he cut and cast off, as his fancy and affection changed? How many princes of the blood, with a world of others of all degrees, did he execute? Yea in his very death-bed,” &c. Raleigh's Pref. to his Hist. of the World.

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In the first of these important struggles, the defence of our happy constitution was intrusted to the LAITY: In the latter it was assumed by the CLERGY. And were we to judge only by events, these would be enough to expose the injustice of that clamour so frequently raised against our Order by the common enemies of our holy Faith, "that in all matters wherein public liberty is concerned, the Clergy, either through malice or ignorance, so embroil and defeat the counsels of honest men, as shews they are inveterate enemies, or at least very unfit agents, of the *common rights of subjects*."

But I will not take this advantage. Nor does their cause or character require it. The truth (and truth can never hurt them) was this, The LAITY were new in the trade of opposition. They felt their grievances too sensibly: They resented them too warmly. They had suffered under many repeated acts of injustice; and the frequent promises of redress, which they had procured by a constant attention to their trust, they had seen as often violated. Successful opposition made the Spirit of liberty run high: and distrust and jealousy hindered them from finding any other safety than in arms; though satisfaction had been already procured by the ordinary, legal way, of the Constitution. What followed was all madness and despair: till anarchy and confusion shut up the dreadful scene of JURIDICAL murders and SPIRITUAL impieties. But, see now, the efficacy of Liberty and true Religion, when they have mingled their powers together! The ruined Constitution rose again more suddenly than it fell: But, rising out of a chaos, by the sole force of its natural virtue, unassisted by the experienced hand of Policy to form and proportion its parts, it revived with the same imperfections that had occasioned all the precedings calamities. A melancholy preface, that the friends of liberty were not yet gotten to the end of their labours. Such was the miscarriage of the LAITY.

But now the CLERGY, when it came to their turn, on a later occasion, to stand in the gap against oppression, had learned the  
great

great art of putting their Enemy \* in the wrong, by forbearing to excite the people to the last remedy of the Constitution, till He had plainly shewn that he was inexorable, by arming himself with a *divine right* to govern against Law. And even then, grown wiser by former errors, both of their own and of the *Laiety*, they conducted themselves so sagely, and directed others so temperately, that they not only recovered the Establishment from the brink of ruin, but enabled the Legislature to repair and perfect those defects and weaknesses which had so often brought it into that condition. This gave a new birth to the Constitution, and fixed it on that solid basis of liberty on which we now enjoy it; and which nothing but our own follies, can unsettle. For though it may be stirred or shaken by the application of any trifling power, yet, like that ancient image of its state, the *rocking-stones* of our ancestors the DRUIDS, no united force can remove it from its centre. For that exactness of balance which subjects it to the first appearance of danger, secures it from all real and substantial injuries.

Amongst the benefits this new Establishment produced, the CHURCH received, as it well deserved, its share; which was the removing from it that scandal to true religion, *restraint on the consciences of men*. But the Church of *Christ* never receives a courtesy from the State, that it does not, sooner or later, repay with interest. Of which it hath given us an instance in the unnatural rebellion just now suppressed: when every thing that is dear to us came suddenly, nobody knows how, into hazard; and was, by the valour and conduct of a brave young Prince, under the manifest guidance of Providence, as suddenly retrieved. At this important juncture, no order of men better approved themselves to the State than the body of the Clergy; though all exerted an unusual vigour for its preservation. And to this wise and happy attachment, of a WHOLE PEOPLE TO A CONSTITUTION, was owing, next to the distinguished protection of Heaven, the preservation of *British* liberty, and in that, of the liberties of MANKIND.

\* James II.

Thus have I endeavoured to shew, from REASON and FACT, how naturally true Religion produceth civil freedom: and, when produced, how strongly it supports it. Which is a sufficient answer to the dull invectives of ignorant or malicious Libertines, against *Christianity* and its *Ministers*; as if both were obnoxious and unfriendly to the cause of liberty; as if the end of Religion was to chain down slavery on us by conscience; and the business of the Clergy only to fasten the rivets. On the contrary, we have seen, under the first head, how auspicious the true Faith is to free Government; and under the second, how faithfully devoted the Ministers of that Faith are to its interests.

It will be said, perhaps, that their merit to the State was very equivocal at the *Revolution*; the time when they most pride themselves in their service to it: For that their great object was the CHURCH: with little regard to the civil Establishment; whose reformation they retarded, if not endangered, by that absurd system of SUCCESSION, which they had been long instilling; and whose infection then worked strongly to the disturbance of that august assembly then solemnly *convened* for settling the nation.

To which I answer, it is no wonder, the Clergy should be most solicitous about what was their proper care; what they best understood; and what was then deemed to be in most danger: That if they knew little of the nature and rights of Society, they might be well excused, as they had been misled by a set of COURT DIVINES, who had betrayed and sacrificed the Principles of the REFORMERS, to the practices of *James* and *Charles* the First's Ministers; and as they had never been taught by *experience*, the blessings of a free Government, regulated upon true principles. Nor is this candid representation at the expence of justice: For when now become happy by a Constitution, which they themselves had so largely contributed to procure, they manifested, by their early and unanimous assistance, in the late danger to the State, that they know as well how to prize the benefits of free Government, as the blessings of pure Religion.

On

On the whole, therefore, whether we consider the genius of Religion, or the conduct of its Ministers, we must needs conclude, That *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

## II.

But REVELATION rarely gives us one Truth to contemplate, without enabling REASON to pursue the argument, to the discovery of another. So it is in the case before us. The very PROOF of this apostolic proposition, that *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, shews the fact to be inverted; and, that WHERE LIBERTY IS, THERE IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, *i. e.* that civil liberty is favourable to, and naturally productive of, true Religion. For if, as hath been said, true Religion be auspicious to civil liberty by the similar PRINCIPLE on which both are established; by the same MAXIMS on which both are administered; by the like END to which both are directed; and by the same ENLARGEMENT of *the human faculties*, which both naturally produce; it will then follow, that *civil liberty is equally auspicious to true religion*: So that whichever be the first established, it will, when all foreign impediments are away, make room for, and introduce the other \*.

This

\* En regardant la Religion simplement du côté de la politique, il paroît que la PROTESTANTE est la plus convenable aux *republiques* et aux *monarchies*; elle s'accorde le mieux avec cet esprit de LIBERTÉ qui fait l'essence des premières: car dans un état où il faut des négocians, des laboureurs, des artisans, des soldats, des sujets en un mot, il est sur que des citoyens, qui sont vœu de laisser périr l'espèce humaine, deviennent pernicieux. Dans les monarchies, la *religion protestante*, qui ne relève de personne, est entièrement soumise au gouvernement; au lieu que la *catholique* établit un état spirituel, tout-puissant, second en complots et en artifices dans l'état temporel du prince; que les prêtres qui dirigent les consciences, et qui n'ont de supérieur que le pape, sont plus maîtres des peuples que la souverain qui les gouverne, et que par une adresse à confondre les intérêts de Dieu avec l'ambition des hommes, le pape s'est vu souvent en opposition avec des souverains sur des sujets qui n'étoient aucunement du ressort de l'Eglise. *Memoirs de la Maison de Brandebourg*, p. 276. *ed.* 8vo.

This inverted truth is, on this side as well as on the other, confirmed likewise by *Fact*. The Christian Religion, on its first appearance, making its earliest and readiest way, through the free cities of *Greece* and *Lesser Asia*.

But to bring the matter home to the present occasion ; let us just take a view of the advantages which civil freedom affords for the exertion of the *Spirit of the Lord*, both in *faith and practice*, by means of the two great principles of LIBERTY and JUSTICE ; on which, a free State is founded and administered.

It is pleasant enough likewise to see another writer, the celebrated M. Voltaire, a very good Catholic, whom a *philosophic Spirit*, an' please you, *l'esprit vraiment philosophique*, has taught to despise REVELATION ; to see him, I say, bring this very truth to discredit both the *Gospel* and the *Reformation*. The latter, in his opinion, only reviving that REPUBLICAN SPIRIT in the West of Europe, which the other first kindled in Greece and Asia. "Ne pourroit-on pas trouver peut-être l'origine de cette nouvelle peste qui a ravagé la terre [la fureur des guerres de Religion] dans "L'ESPRIT REPUBLICAIN qui anima les premières Eglises ? Les assemblées secrètes, qui bravoient d'abord dans des caves & dans des grottes l'autorité des "Empereurs Romains, formerent peu-à-peu un état dans l'état. C'étoit un REPUBLICAINE cachée au milieu de l'Empire.—Les anciennes opinions RENOUVELLES depuis "par LUTHER, par ZWINGLE, par CALVIN, tendoient pour la plupart à détruire l'autorité *Episcopale*, & même la puissance *Monarchique*. C'est une des principales causes "secrètes, qui firent recevoir ces dogmes dans le nord de l'Allemagne où l'on craignoit "d'être asservi par les Empereurs. Ces opinions triomphèrent en Suede & en Danemarck, "pays où les peuples étoient libres sous des Rois. Les ANGLAIS, DANS QUI LA NATURE "A MIS L'ESPRIT D'INDEPENDANCE, les adopterent—Elles pénétrèrent en Pologne, et "y firent beaucoup de progrès dans les seules villes où le peuple n'est point esclave. La "Suisse n'eut pas de peine à les recevoir, parce qu'elle étoit République. Elles furent "sur le point d'être établies à Venise par la même raison—Les Hollandois ne prirent "cette Religion, que quand ils secouèrent le joug de l'Espagne. Genève devint un Etat "populaire, en devenant Calviniste \*." Here he owns, that as, in the former instances, Civil Liberty procured Reformation, so in this of Geneva, Reformation procured Civil Liberty. His assignation of the *cause* and *effect* is not exact. Reformation was the *cause* in Holland and some other places as well as in Geneva. However, you have here an Enemy of Revelation bearing testimony to these great truths, that WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY ; and that where liberty is, there the *Spirit of the Lord* will not be long absent.

\* Le Siècle de Louis XIV. Tom. II. p. 185. Lond. 1753, 8vo.

1. The first advantage ariseth from the allowance of free enquiry, which the maintenance of the rights of conscience disposeth men to make in religious matters. By this employment, we come of course to the Author of Truth and to the profession of his Religion in its PURITY: This was the case of those, who took the liberty before it was allowed them: Nor was their labour vain. They dug through the rubbish of papal superstition, till they came to the pure fountain of Gospel-truth. FREE ENQUIRY can never fairly, and of itself, terminate in UNBELIEF. Infidelity is the natural product of restraint and spiritual tyranny, when borne by us with suspicion and reluctance. For then we are apt to reflect, and to reason on the truth and fitness of the things imposed. And the least attention is sufficient to convince us of the absurdity of what we find thus violently established. But restraint not affording us the *means*, nor slavery the *courage* to penetrate through inveterate errors into truth, we run with blind resentment into a brutal infidelity; hurried forward by that common infirmity of the untaied mind, which perpetually inclines it to fall from one extreme to another. Hence it is we see *France* and *Italy* over-run with the worst kind of *Deism*. There our travelling Gentry first picked it up for a rarity. And, indeed, at first, without much malice. It was brought home in a cargo of new fashions: and worn, for some time, with that levity by the importers, and treated with that contempt by the rest, as suited, and was due, to the apishness of foreign manners: Till a set of solemn blockheads, grown insolent by liberty, and malicious by unsuccessful attempts towards distinction, abused the indulgence of a free Government, in reducing those vague impieties into a system. And so it was, that licentious ignorance came to be distinguished with the name of FREE THINKING. Thus *liberty abused*, we see, comes to the same issue with *liberty oppressed*. They both terminate in IGNORANCE, with this only difference, that the one is the ignorance of the *Few*, and the other the ignorance of the *Many*. But that these are not the genuine fruits of liberty appears from the example of the best and

wisest Men, whom it hath ever conducted to the knowledge and belief of Revelation.

2. Nor is civil liberty less friendly to the MORALITY, than to the DOCTRINE, of the Gospel. The Government of a free State is administered by a system of equal laws; founded in the general maxims of Justice; and objective to the Common good. For all States are administered by the same principles on which they are erected. Now a habitude to such laws must needs enable men to judge more truly, and to think more favourably, of the *morality* of the Gospel; solely calculated to promote the peace, and to multiply the blessings of mankind. For as to that inconsistency, between the maxims of POLICY and RELIGION, so affectedly insinuated by those who would palliate their vicious practice, or recommend their impious opinions, it is no where to be found, but in the administration of despotic Governments, or of those mongrel free ones, which, forsaking the genius of their institution, act like such as are most arbitrary. And, indeed, how could the maxims of *Policy* and *Religion* be inconsistent? Unless there were DIFFERENT ROADS to *happiness here*, as the supporters of this paradox pretend there are, to *happiness hereafter*. But since the temporal good of Man, whether rising, as in *Religion*, from the acts of particulars to the whole; or descending, as in *society*, from the acts of the whole to particulars; since this, I say, can only be procured by the application of the same invariable principles of NATURAL JUSTICE, we must needs conclude, That true Policy and Religion are not only perfectly consistent, but (as was the purpose of the foregoing account to shew) mutually beneficent.

These reciprocal advantages, arising from the very Being and Nature of either institution, are one part of that mutual aid and support, so much spoken of, which Religion and civil Government lend to one another.

A *second* springs from the natural influence of their respective powers: And there is yet a *third*, which is derived from the artificial application, and interchange of those powers. But of the two latter parts,

parts, I have elsewhere discoursed at large \* ; and mention them in this place for no other purpose than to give light to an acknowledged Fact, employed to enforce the application, proper for this glad solemnity, in which we celebrate the divine mercies for our late providential deliverance.

### III.

Now the sense of these mercies should always rise in proportion to the consciousness of our own demerit. And this will naturally draw us to that only acceptable return of service, *The reformation of our lives and manners.*

The unhappy condition of human things makes the greatest goods of providence most liable to abuse. The moral State of the People is now felt by all, and apprehended by many. For, blessed be God, our condition is not yet so desperate as to render us insensible.

It is a FREE Government only that attains the *end* of Government ; which is, so to improve the mind and accommodate the body, as to make a rational life safe and elegant. Its *equity* allows free enquiry, which leads to truth ; and its *policy* encourages commerce, which produces plenty. But men grown wanton by prosperity abuse the liberty of thinking, and the fruits of industry ; so as to indulge every wanton fancy of the mind, and every vicious appetite of the body. From hence arise INFIDELITY and LUXURY, the two capital evils of our infatuated countrymen.

The heighth, to which they are both arrived, cannot be aggravated ; and need not be particularly described. The case is notorious, and confessed. So that nothing remains, on this occasion, but to exhort you, from motives of the utmost consequence, now at length after Religion hath done so much for you, in producing liberty, to let liberty do its part, and produce *the Spirit of the Lord* ; that is, a reverential *regard* for that which gave birth to liberty,

\* See The Alliance between Church and State.

Revealed Religion, and a *moderate* use (such as even natural Religion prescribes) of these good things, which Commerce, the offspring of liberty, hath procured for us.

1. We may consider, therefore, in the first place, how unsuitable it is to the nature of civil Freedom to fall back into the slavery of vice and error, to which tyranny had kept men enthralled. The excellency of civil Freedom consists in its power of emancipating the mind as well as body; and making the whole man dependent on himself. For what matters it to be exempted from the chains of a precarious tyrant, if we still continue slaves to the caprice of our own corrupt nature? We are freed by Providence from the unjust dominion of a Master, that we may *enjoy* the blessings of Nature in that just measure in which they are bestowed upon us. But can this be done amidst the excesses of *Luxury* and *Irreligion*? The *enjoyment* of good implies *pleasure* in its use. But all pleasure arises from these two sources, the *passive sensation* and the *reflex act*. In the first, *moderation* constitutes the pleasure. For those agreeable sensations, which the appetite to good provokes, and the possession of it gratifies, are all lost and dissipated by *excess*; which produces, instead of pleasure, disgust and loathing; every racking distemper of the body, and every inflamed passion of the mind. From the second source, the *reflex act*, arises our grateful meditation on the Giver. And what generous mind is there whose pleasure, in the moderate use of worldly things, is not doubled by the consideration of their flowing from the kindness of a friend, whose affection for us is always operating for our good? How high then must be the raptures of the religious man, who considers all he enjoys as the gift of him who gave him life, and preserves him in being. But all this pleasure *Irreligion* destroys; and leaves nothing in its stead, but an unsatisfactory indulgence of the grosser appetites; much below the brutal, as it is haunted with the dismal apprehensions, of a miserable reverse: a reverse not in his power either to prevent or retard, as it is, upon his own wretched principles, the caprice of Chance, or the fixed order of Destiny; which

which is for ever clouding or shifting the scene. Thus unsuitable to the ends of *Freedom* are vice and error.

They are no less inconsistent with the character of a *Free-man*. It is the *Free-man's* glory to have vindicated the dignity of human nature, in shaking off oppression, and becoming his own master. This is indeed his glory. But if he stop here, his sweat and blood are spent in vain. Had he a body only to take care of, he had done his work, when he secured it from outward violence. But Humanity is not an empty carcase. Its nobler part is an informing mind; the guide, the director, and final object of its operations. If he suffer this to be brought into subjection, all his boasts of outward Freedom are childish and impotent.

Yet shall this wretched victim of Luxury and Irreligion look high: and pretend to pity the SAVAGE, who hath never got, and despise the SLAVE, who was unable to preserve, the mighty blessings of Social life and Liberty. But let Them speak for themselves: Let us hear them in their turn, and observe how easily they confound his miserable Vanity and Arrogance. “—And why,” says the *Savage*, “will you affect to pity me? Do not I use the gifts of Nature just as you employ the benefits of Society? Whatever chance hath thrown in my way, or my honest toil hath procured, I waste indeed, and devour with an intemperate and beastly appetite. But are you more humane or circumspect, after having amassed the spoils of your Country, or succeeded to the patrimony of your Ancestors? You may disguise, indeed, our common brutality under the civilized language of *sacrificing to your genius*: But your riot is the more insufferable, as your pretended *arts of life* have taught you to preserve, to improve, and to multiply the blessings of Providence, so as to make the enjoyment lasting and diffusive. Whereas We waste them just as we receive them from Nature's hand, rude and perishable: being as unable to preserve or improve them, as *to use them with moderation*; Moderation, that *art of life*, which, sensible experience tells us, must needs be the leader and conductor of all the rest.

“For,

“ For, whatever difference there may be, in other respects, between  
 “ Society and Savage life, they agree in this, that want, distress,  
 “ and misery, are the certain issue of luxury and riot. But here,  
 “ the untaught *Indian* might set you a lesson. The \* patience,  
 “ the fortitude, and resignation, with which we bear the wants,  
 “ we bring upon ourselves, astonish the civilized beholder. But,  
 “ if he tell us true, of what passes in Cities, the issue of your  
 “ luxury wears a very different face. The first approaches of dis-  
 “ tress make you restless and impatient. You quarrel with the  
 “ Government you are so vain of; you despise the Rulers you have  
 “ chosen; you trample on the Laws you had so hotly demanded;  
 “ and, unless the relief be speedy, your giddy madness drives you  
 “ on, till you precipitate yourselves into that condition, you so  
 “ much affect to pity, a *State of Nature*: Indeed, so circumstanced,  
 “ of all conditions the most pitiable. For this which, with us, is  
 “ a *State of Peace*, is, with you, as both the politician holds,  
 “ and the people feel, a *state of war and madness*, where every  
 “ man’s hand is set against his God and his brother.” Thus might  
 the Savage answer.

Nor has the Slave of arbitrary power less advantages in this con-  
 tention, while he thus addresses this vain idolater of liberty; “ You  
 “ triumph in your generous exploits; when, in vindication of your  
 “ own freedom, you retrieved, what you call, the scandal of  
 “ human nature, the lying patiently at the foot of a tyrant. But  
 “ cease these empty braggings, and attend to your gains. What have  
 “ you got, good man! by shaking off oppression? Have you shaken  
 “ off, with it, those Impieties that make oppression heavy, and  
 “ Slavery indeed a scandal? If the plague-sore of irreligion, that en-  
 “ demic evil of despotic governments, still continues to corrupt your

\* This character of the savage is common to all the natives of South and North  
 America, as our voyagers and missionaries agree.—Gloutons jusqu’à la voracité, quand  
 ils ont de quoi se satisfaire; sobres, quand la nécessité les y oblige, jusqu’à se passer de  
 tout, sans paroître rien désirer. Relation d’un voyage dans l’Amérique Merid. par  
 M. de la Condamine, p. 52.

“ notions, how miserable is your boasted freedom ! You are only  
 “ accumulating guilt, while you thought to reap the fruit of your  
 “ labour. Glory or profit you can pretend to none. That fortitude  
 “ of reason, which led you to Liberty, hath *betrayed* you in the  
 “ pursuit of Truth : and those unsightly errors you have embraced  
 “ in its stead, suffer you not to *enjoy* the blessing you had so greatly  
 “ purchased. You borrow our vices, while you despise the slavery  
 “ that produced them ; not considering that our abject state affords  
 “ some excuse for these disorders, which your happier situation  
 “ renders unpardonable. You have light to lead you to the source  
 “ of truth ; you have liberty to profess it. Error is of a piece with  
 “ the rest of our fortunes. And if, like beasts of burthen, we are  
 “ to move as our conductors drive us, it is something more tolera-  
 “ ble to drudge on blindfold, than to have the uneasy prospect of a  
 “ better way, which we are not permitted to pursue.” Thus far  
 with justice, might those, we most pity and despise, recriminate  
 upon us.

In a word, without freedom from *vice* and *error*, the rest is but  
 the shadow of liberty. At best, but as the ornaments of dress to  
 a distempered body, absurd and cumbersome ; though, to one in  
 strength and vigour, they become the preservation of health, and  
 the improvement of natural beauty.

2. But if what we owe Ourselves and the dignity of our com-  
 mon nature will not move us ; we should, at least, consider what  
 we owe to *Providence*. Our case, how light soever we may make  
 of it, is a little uncommon. We find ourselves in possession of the  
 greatest human good, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, at a time  
 when almost all the rest of mankind lie in slavery and error. This  
 is no ordinary mercy. Nor is this conceit the effect of that vulgar  
 prejudice to *country* or *opinions*, which always inclines men to over-  
 rate their own advantages. It is a Fact, we feel : a Fact, we see :  
 a truth which all the conclusions of reason support ; and the united  
 voice of experience confirms. So that if there be any thing certain,  
 this is not to be disputed, That we *Englishmen* (how unworthy

soever) are at present most indebted to Providence of the whole race of mankind.

Nor is this all. The bestowing these blessings on us was but the *earnest* of God's favour to us. His election of us for the instruments of his glory is more clearly seen in his preservation of us, at every important crisis, when human power and policy, as in our late deliverance, seemed combined to our destruction. Of which, whoever doubts, must be either very ignorant of our history, or very ready to call in question God's moral government. Not that we are to fancy ourselves, on these accounts, the peculiar favourites of Heaven. But rather that we hear it speaking to us, as it did sometime to the *Jews*, *I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake*. It is possible we may be selected by Providence, in these latter ages, to preserve the memory of civil liberty amidst a slavish world, as the *house of Israel* was formerly, to keep alive true religion amidst an universal apostasy. And, if this be the case, we betray our trust as well as forfeit our obligations, when we neglect to make a suitable return.

But, on whatever footing we receive our blessings, our debt of gratitude is the same: which, at this time especially, calls upon us to consider seriously how we shall best address ourselves to discharge it. Right reason tells, that the most acceptable way of returning God's mercies, is to apply them to the attainment of that *further good*, which they are capable of producing: Especially when, in the nature of things, the mercies given are only the MEANS; and that *further good* is the END. We have shewn, that CIVIL LIBERTY does, above all other blessings, afford us the largest helps to the improving ourselves in the *principles* and *practice* of TRUE RELIGION. How desperate then is our ingratitude if we neglect to make the best use of so happy a situation! a situation which enables us to advance as far beyond our neighbours in piety and virtue, as we are placed above them in liberty and power: And if, instead of applying these advantages to the purposes for which they were intended by Nature, and directed by Providence, it

it should be found we have only abused them to the inflaming our impiety and luxury, what name can be given to so horrid a profanation ! an abuse of God's mercies so strangely unnatural, that though experience makes it familiar to us, yet retired Reason stands aghast at so inexpiable a prodigy.

3. But however indulgent we may be to those idle notions in *theology*, which promise us impunity for our transgressions of the *law of God*; we yet would blush to be thought so ignorant in *philosophy*, as not to know, that there is no escaping the ruin which follows the violated *order of things*. NATURE, to which our libertines fly, from the GOD OF MERCY, is more stubborn and vindictive. We have shewn the mutual aid and support which true religion and civil liberty impart to one another; and the necessary connection established between them. We always find, that when civil liberty is gone, the *religion of the sovereign* takes place; that is, any kind of superstition fitted to the support of arbitrary power: and slaves are ready to receive even the worst. Again, the fall of true religion, whether betrayed by *Superstition* or suffering open violence by *Infidelity*, draws after it the destruction of civil liberty.

How *Superstition* helps it on, hath been shewn in the former part of this discourse: and how *Infidelity* (that is, a contempt both of the principles and practice of religion) precipitates its ruin, is seen by all who understand what effects *impiety* hath on the *security*; and *luxury* on the *stability* of Government. These are old beaten topics, which the common sense of mankind hath made current in all ages.

#### IV.

I shall attempt, therefore, to illustrate and enforce this truth (which one may justly reckon amongst the first principles of true politics) by an observation not so commonly attended to, “ That  
“ though *Impiety* and *Luxury* be the certain bane of civil society in  
“ general, yet they are more speedily destructive of a FREE  
“ STATE.”

The two immediate supports of Government against inward and outward violence, are PUNISHMENT *of offenders*, and FUNDS *for the public expence*. Now, irreligion and luxury hinder a *free State*, more than any other, from making these necessary provisions: as, in such a State, the *conviction* of the guilty, and the *exaction* of subsidies, are regulated and restrained by equal and established laws.

The enlarged wants, and inflamed appetites of men in social life, have so improved their cunning in the arts of secret injustice, as to evade all the force and resentment of human statutes. Here Religion comes in aid of the Law, to frighten men, by the terror of an invisible Judge, from those crimes which escape the notice of the Magistrate.

Now, take off this restraint, and see the different effects it will have upon a *free*, and a *despotic* Government. The Latter hath found, in the very genius of its constitution, a speedy and vigorous remedy to this evil, by (what goes for nothing with an arbitrary Magistrate) the violation of natural justice, in the use of the rack, and conviction on doubtful evidence. Which, though perhaps begun in the wantonness of power, repeated to gratify some oblique interest, and continued out of habit, were at length found so necessary a balance to disorder, where Religion had lost its hold, that it became a maxim in these sorts of Governments, “that it was “better ten innocent men should suffer, than that one offender “should escape.” And on this maxim, they have long regulated their administration of civil justice.

On the other hand, a *free State*, not only denounceth the crimes it punishes, by written Laws, but prescribes and adjusts the proof of them by explicit modes of invariable practice. While the prosecution of them is carried on by established Forms, regulated on public equity, and the national justice of a whole community. This, with all its general uses for the security of particulars, cannot but embolden the secret contrivers of evil: which our Law seems to have been aware of when it endeavoured to hide the inconvenience under a maxim founded in its natural lenity, “that  
“ it

“ it is better twice ten guilty persons should escape, than one innocent man suffer \*.” A maxim, though becoming the genius and dignity of a free Society ; yet at the same time it betrays the want of some restraining Principle, which may co operate with human Laws. So that when Religion is gone, which only can afford a principle adequate to this service, we see in what a desperate condition the best Governments, because they are the best, will be left.

Again, with regard to the support of Government against foreign injuries. In a free State the public subsidies are the act of a delegated legislature ; and so, of course, the voluntary contributions of the People : Which generally will be restrained in too light a proportion to their abilities, rather than extended to the necessities of the occasion. Now when a free People are debauched by luxury, and impoverished by the expence which must feed and supply their excesses ; and consequently, are become both unwilling and unable to answer the public demands, To what distress must the State, in such exigencies, be reduced ?

But it is not thus in a land of slaves : where the blood and sweat of the people make part of their Master’s exchequer : Where what is deemed the wealth of the Country to-day, becomes the Court-treasure to morrow : where money, by the magic of arbitrary power, is transformed into fairy favours ; of one value when issued out ; and of another when called in again.

Now this being the consequence of the ESTABLISHED ORDER OF THINGS, it is no wonder it should be inevitable. For why did God establish this order, but to fix such bounds of right and wrong as should serve for the direction of mankind ? On the contrary, might events happen out of, or contrary to, this course, then would God’s providence no longer govern, nor man’s purposes have any aim ; but the *moral* world would fall into a chaos as incapable of

\* *Mallet* revera viginti facinorosos mortem pietate evadere, quam justum unum injuste condemnari. *FORTESCUE*, de Laudibus Legum Angliæ, C. xxvii.

observing the law ordained for its direction, as the *natural* was in that state from which the almighty fiat awaked it, and called it forth for creation.

On the whole then, my brethren, if you have any regard to your character of free subjects to a lawful Prince, of grateful worshippers of a beneficent God, or of rational dependents on a well-ordered System; you will, in good earnest, set upon reforming those horrid abuses which make vicious Free-men a scandal to those sacred relations. Remember you are called upon by all that is excellent in Humanity, by all that is holy in Religion, and by all that is right and fit in the Order of things. And should you still continue deaf to the united voice of *Nature* and *Grace*, that which is out of Nature, and reprobate to Grace, the only things you have left, atheistic CHANCE or FATE, will prove utterly unable to snatch you from this impending ruin.

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S E R M O N IV.

ON THE NATURE OF THE MARRIAGE UNION.

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MATTH. xix. 6.

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NO MAN PUT  
ASUNDER.

**G**OD, as *Creator* of the World, is Author of the *constitution of* NATURE; and as *moral Governor* of the World, he is Author of the *constitution of* GRACE. It is impiety, therefore, in man to attempt any alterations in either System: whether it be by *putting asunder what God hath joined together*, the crime here forbidden; or by joining together what God hath put asunder; which is generally the next step in this progress of human folly. For when men have dissolved the established combinations made by God, their preceding interests invite them, or their subsequent necessities draw them on, to make others of their own.

I shall.

I shall first explain the Precept of my text in its general import : and then consider it as applied to the particular occasion on which it was delivered.

Amongst the more important combinations in the *constitution of Nature*, God hath *joined together*, as CAUSE AND EFFECT, Virtue and Happiness, Vice and Misery. Now should the CIVIL MAGISTRATE so far forget his office of God's Delegate, as to annex rewards to Vice, and punishment to Virtue, he would incur the double guilt of *putting asunder what God hath joined together*, and of joining together what he had put asunder.

Again, God hath joined together, as RELATIVE AND CORRELATIVE, Children's obedience to their Parents, and Parents care and support of their Children. Here too should the CIVIL MAGISTRATE, like the Jewish Priests with their *Corban*, infringe upon the first, on pretence that the Public had need of all the Children's service; and on the latter, on pretence that it hath need of the purses of the Parent; he would be equally guilty of this impiety.

All attempts to separate what God hath joined together in the *constitution of Grace* hath the same wickedness and folly. God hath joined together, AS THE FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURE of one Church in Christ, the Jewish and the Gospel dispensations. But should PARTICULARS, when embarrassed and perplexed with difficulties arising from certain circumstances in the Jewish History and Religion, presume to violate this connexion, by denying any necessary dependence of Christianity upon it: what would this be but the prophane separation here condemned ?

Again, God hath joined together, AS THE GIFT AND THE CONDITION OF IT, Belief in Jesus the Messiah, and everlasting life. A connexion, which, in the language of Divines, is called *justifying Faith*. But should PARTICULARS, from their ignorance, their imperfect conception of the true nature of the Christian dispensation, or from the injury which the abuse of this doctrine hath occasioned

to

to virtue and morality, venture to deny that it is *faith alone which justifies*, such men would assuredly incur all the guilt of this impious separation.

This is but a small specimen of the numerous cases which might be given of the folly and perversity of men, in rebelling against God, and violating the constitution of NATURE, and the œconomy of GRACE. But it is enough to shew what mischiefs attend, and what impieties accompany, the separating by human will, or by human Authority, what God by his will, or his nature, hath joined and united. For what can be conceived more destructive than to violate the settled order of things; or more impious than to counterwork the design of him who established that order?

But to come to the particular occasion of the precept.

The Law of Moses, for the wise ends of Providence, indulged the *Israelites* in the use of *Polygamy* and *Divorce*. These, which were allowed them for the *hardness of their hearts*, had, by length of time, and the corruption of their manners, still further degenerated into a more licentious abuse: so as to stand in need of the animadversion of him who came to *fulfil the Law and the Prophets*.

He more obliquely reforms *Polygamy*, by observing that, at the Creation, the human race began by a *male and female*; and that these were made *man and wife* \*. He more directly condemns their practice of *Divorce*, by observing that God had pronounced, *They twain should be one flesh* †. From whence he infers, that *whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery, and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery* ‡: for that God having joined them together on those terms, it was impiety in man to alter the conditions of the contract: *What God (saith he) hath joined together, let no man put asunder*.

\* Ver. 5.

† Ibid.

‡ Ver. 9.

That it is highly criminal, therefore, for human Authority to put asunder those whom God in matrimony hath made one, is allowed and confessed on all hands.

The only question is, *WHEN* the two Parties may be said to be *THUS joined together, or made one.*

To determine this, we should consider *MARRIAGE* under all its forms. And, first, in its most simple idea, divested of its relation to *revealed Religion* and *civil Society*.

This union is, in itself, partly *natural*, and partly *social*.

So far as regards the *condition*, that is, the prohibited degrees; and the *end*, the procreation of the species, it holds of *Nature*: In what concerns the mutual aid and support of the parties, and their distinct claims to certain rights and privileges, it holds of *Society*. But *Nature* and *human Society* alone seem not to have determined either against *POLYGAMY* or *DIVORCE*.

*Revealed Religion* and *Civil Government* soon followed. They were introduced to perfect human nature according to their several characters. What additions or regulations they brought with them is next to be considered.

*RELIGION* declares marriage to be the union of one to one: and the reason given is, that God at first created only one of each sex. It declares the union to be indissoluble; because the female was made out of the substance of the male. And thus marriage, from a *natural*, became a *religious* union.

*CIVIL GOVERNMENT* requires, that to make *private contracts* (in which *Society* is affected) valid and binding, they be entered into and executed by prescribed and public forms. 1. Because the ministry of public justice is to compel to the performance of them: so that it is but fit it should prescribe the conditions of the act it is to vindicate. 2. Because some contracts, as this of marriage, have civil rights and privileges annexed unto them.

Thus we see, Marriage is of a *MIXED* nature; in part a sacred ordinance, in part a human institution. It hath both a *natural*,  
and

and a *social* efficacy : Considered in a natural light, as an union of male and female, from whence all the charities of human life arise, it is a *religious* contract : Considered in a social light, as creating new relations and connexions, all of which have their distinct rights and privileges assigned to them in civil life, it partakes of a *civil* contract.

This distinction is marked out to us by the nature of things ; and confirmed by Laws, divine and human.

What then, it may be asked, are the distinct parts which God and the MAGISTRATE claim, as their peculiar, in this solemn contract ? It is from God that two are made one by an indissoluble tie : and this is the LAW OF RELIGION. It is from the Magistrate that this Union, ordained by Heaven, is executed by a solemn form prescribed by the State : and this is the LAW OF SOCIETY.

In confirmation of what is here said, it is remarkable that in the Jewish Law, where all even the most minute matters that concern religious rites and ceremonies are circumstantially prescribed ; nay, where the most exact directions concerning the legality and illegality of Marriages are delivered ; it is remarkable, I say, that there is no *Form* of the marriage-ceremony : though the *Ritual Law* abounds with all other forms that relate to Offerings, Lustrations, and Sacrifices. The same sage œconomy may be remarked in the Gospel. Though Jesus, as we see, reformed the abusive practices crept into Marriage, yet he prescribes no *Form* for the celebration of it : as he has done for *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. What is this but a plain declaration by the Founders of both Religions, that the *Form* of celebration belongs to the civil Magistrate ?

From all this, it necessarily follows, That till this sacred Union, instituted by God in Paradise, be sealed and confirmed by such rites and ceremonies, as the wisdom and policies of civil States direct to be observed, God hath not *joined* any Pair *together*, according to his holy ordinance : and that the observance of such rites

and ceremonies is essential to that union which he declares to be indissoluble.

To suppose this Union may be *authentically* made in the present state of Religion and Society, without the intervention of the civil Magistrate, leads either to *fanaticism* or *licentiousness*.

The only two conceivable means besides are, Either God's *revelation* of his purpose to the parties concerned, as in the case of the first pair : Or else his *declared* sanctification of the natural desires, and private agreement of those who come together by sensual impulse, without the intervention of the Magistrate's allowance, and the sanction of his cooperating authority ; so as to make their private act God's act, and thereby erect it into that religious Union, which he forbids human power to disturb or violate.

To expect God's extraordinary appointment would be opening the door to a new species of fanaticism which, inflamed by the most violent of our natural passions, would know no bounds.

To give the prerogatives of a sacred union to the private desires of the two sexes would disturb Society, by rendering Succession precarious, the Relations which arise from marriage uncertain, and the Rights and prerogatives annexed to them undeterminable.

In a word, the one would dishonour the sanctity of Religion ; the other would disorder the harmony of Civil life. And therefore we may be sure God hath not done, nor will do, either one or the other.

We return then to our conclusion, That the marriage-bond which Jesus, in my text, forbids man's presumption to dissolve, is a contract so **VIRTUALLY** circumstanced as the Laws of Religion ordain ; and so **FORMALLY** executed as the Laws of each particular Society prescribe.

Where either of these requisites are wanting, it is not that Union of which God is pleased to call himself the Author ; and which he forbids

forbids man, on any other terms than that which the Religion of his Son prescribes, to dissolve.

From these clear *principles*, and this certain *deduction*, we collect the *justice* and Religion, as well as *expedience* and true Policy of a late salutary Law solely calculated for the support and ornament of Society: by which the just rights and Authority of Parents are vindicated; the peace and harmony of families preserved; the irregular appetites of Youth restrained; and the worst and basest kind of seduction encountered and defeated. I mean, that sage provision, whereby all pretended Marriages, not solemnized as the WISDOM OF OUR ANCIENT CONSTITUTION directs, are rendered null and void.

For the dissolution of a mock-marriage not entered into with the previous qualifications the Law of Nature enjoins, nor executed by the public forms which the Laws of Society require, is so far from *putting asunder those whom God hath joined together*, that it is only breaking an insolent and disorderly confederacy in licentiousness, where God's Sanction and the Magistrate's Authority are equally insulted: and by a crime too which indeed favours the most of that very impiety we are so commendably anxious to avoid: there being nothing which God hath more inseparably united than the *obedience* of Children to the *care and protection* of Parents.

And if the indulgence of former times hath confirmed such irregular and lawless combinations, which this Law condemns and dissolves, it proceeded on wrong and mistaken notions concerning the nature of Marriage. For Popish policy had turned this Union into a Sacrament; and Protestant simplicity had, by way of *interim*, given a kind of authority to those Canons in which the system of that policy was contained. But now, that the true principles of *natural Law* and *revealed Religion* have made this solemn and sacred contract better understood, and that the abuses of it were become intolerable, the wisdom of the Legislature found it necessary to provide

vide the efficacious remedy in question : the only one which, on mature consideration, was found to be effectual. And it is worthy our notice, that this, which was the more immediate object of their care, is contrived with so much provident sagacity, that, had it been their directer purpose to seek a means for restoring the SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE to its ancient honours, we cannot conceive a more effectual method than what this very *remedy* has provided. The things which most contribute to excite reflexion, and to impress awe and reverence for any solemn Rite, being all here scrupulously required ; such as previous caution, public notoriety, open celebration, and a well-attested record.

With matters of policy we have nothing to do, any otherwise than as the truths of Religion come in question, by their being actively or passively concerned. And therefore I should here conclude what I had to say on this subject, but that a very material objection to my general argument is supposed to arise from the express words of Scripture. This is within our province ; and, I presume, I may be permitted to examine it.

My argument proceeds on this principle, that MARRIAGE being in part a *religious*, and in part a *civil* contract, it must, in order to give it its essential efficacy, be entered into on such terms as Religion enjoins, and compleated by such forms as the *Civil* Magistrate prescribes. From whence it is inferred, that the mutual agreement of the two Sexes alone is not sufficient to make a *legitimate Marriage*, either in the sight of God or of SOCIETY.

But, to this it is objected, That the *premises* must needs be false, since St. PAUL hath expressly declared against the *conclusion*.  
 “ Know ye not (says he) that your bodies are the members of  
 “ *Christ* ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them  
 “ the members of an harlot ? God forbid. What, know ye not,  
 “ that HE WHICH IS JOINED TO AN HARLOT IS ONE BODY ? FOR  
 “ TWO

“TWO (saith he) SHALL BE ONE FLESH. But he that is *joined to the Lord is one Spirit* \*.”

“Hence, say the objectors, it appears, that no more than the mutual agreement of the two Sexes to come together is necessary to give this contract its most essential quality, namely, **INDISSOLUBILITY**, since the Apostle declares that the two sexes meeting, or at least living, in *Concubinage* (a state Societies disallow, and therefore a contract in which the Magistrate doth not interfere) become **ONE BODY**; the very circumstance which makes an *inseparable union*.”

To understand the weight of this objection, we must consider the Apostle's manner of treating his subject.—To shew the great enormity of *fornication* in a professor of the Gospel, he employs, for one of his topics, that essential property of Marriage, the making the two parties, one *flesh* or *body*.

By **FORNICATION**, we will suppose him to mean frequenting the *Stews*, or that more decent indulgence of the irregular passions called *Concubinage*. And then, according to the sense of the objectors, he lays down this position, *That every whoremonger and barlot become one flesh and one body, by virtue of the holy ordinance of Matrimony instituted in Paradise*. A position, which not only disturbs and violates Society; but, by confounding Concubinage with Marriage, and making them one and the same, leaves the Apostle nothing to argue against, even in the height of his resentment at a criminal association, which this very topic is employed to aggravate.

But this is not all. The Apostle, according to this interpretation, *makes one of two*, where Jesus *makes two of one*. For the Saviour of the world allows *fornication* for a sufficient cause of *divorce*. So that the crime is made to have two contrary effects at once.

\* 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16, 17.

Again, If fornication *makes one, of two*; then, by God's Laws it is both commanded and forbidden. For we are directed to make that union, whereby *two become one*, in the injunction to *increase and multiply*; and yet we are warned, again and again, to *flee fornication*.

Since therefore the sense which supports the objection abounds in these absurdities, we must seek a reasonable meaning elsewhere. That is, in the Author's context, and in the course and tenour of his own reasoning.

St. Paul, in order to expose the enormity of fornication amongst Christians, considers every man as the member of *Christ's* spiritual body; and every man, living in fornication, as the member of a harlot: a profanation which renders the criminal unworthy of the spiritual union with *Christ*. But then, to make the Corinthians still more sensible of this profanation, he sets before them the *closeness* of that spiritual union; which, in his accustomed manner, he inforces by analogy to the thing prophaning. Just as, in another place of this Epistle, he exposes the profanation of the Lord's supper when joined to an Idol-feast, by a comparison between what those two Rites had, or were supposed to have, in common\*. But the union of *Concubinage* not so well fitting his purpose as that of *Marriage*, he employs the latter to inforce the enormity of the former, and, without stopping to change the terms, continues the use of the word *Harlot*, to predicate of her, what is strictly true only of a *Wife*, namely, that *he which is joined to her is one body*.

This seems to be a fair account of the Apostle's illustration. And the manner of expressing it is altogether suited to that quickness of conception, and rapidity of argumentation, which distinguish this great Apostle's reasoning. "He was a man (says Mr. Locke) "of quick parts and warm temper; mighty well versed in the "writings of the *Old Testament*, and full of the doctrine of the

\* See the Discourse on the Lord's Supper, in the Fourth Volume.

“ *New*. All this put together suggested matter to him in abundance, on those subjects that came in his way. So that one may consider him, when he was writing, as beset with a croud of thoughts, all striving for utterance. In this posture of mind it was almost impossible for him to keep a slow pace, and observe minutely that order and method of ranging all he said, from which results an easy and obvious perspicuity — One may see his thoughts were all of a piece in his Epistles: his notions were at all times uniform, and constantly the same: though his expressions very various. *In them he seems to take great liberty*. This is certain, that no one seems *less tied up* to a form of words \*.”

The character here given of St. Paul's *knowledge* shews him to be too well versed both in the *Jewish* and *Christian* dispensations to ascribe the *essential attribute* of MARRIAGE to FORNICATION or *concubinage*: and yet his *genius* made him very capable, amidst a torrent of thought and croud of expression, to use one term for another, which had in them those ideas in common of which he wanted to make use.

But it may be thought perhaps a much easier, as well as juster solution of the difficulty, to suppose that, by FORNICATION, the Apostle meant neither *frequenting the stews*, nor yet *concubinage*; but a *formal marriage*; though within the *Jewish* prohibited degrees.

It is certain that this was the general term which the followers of the Law employed to design such marriages. And we seem to have a very eminent example of it in that famous apostolical decree which commands “ to abstain from pollutions of Idols, and from FORNICATION, and from things strangled, and from blood †.” For this sense of the term removes a difficulty which will for ever embarrass the Decree, while *fornication* is understood to signify

\* Preface to his commentary on St. Paul's Epistles.

† Acts xv. 20.

*vague lust*; whereby things *positive* and *moral* are confounded, and put upon the same foot of obligation; either making abstinence from *fornication* temporal; or abstinence from *things strangled and from blood*, perpetual.

But in the place in question the sense seems yet more evidently determined. The *fornication*, the subject of this *sixth* Chapter, plainly refers to the *fornication* described in the *fifth*. “It is reported commonly (says the Apostle) “that there is fornication amongst you: and such fornication that is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles, THAT ONE SHOULD HAVE HIS FATHER’S WIFE\*.” The crime in question therefore appears to be a MARRIAGE, on the principles of the Jewish Law, incestuous.

And thus the objection, which stands on a supposition that St. Paul is speaking of *concubinage*, in which the marriage-ceremony does not take place, nor consequently the Magistrate interfere, comes to nothing. And let not the Apostle’s calling it such a species of fornication, *as was not named amongst the Gentiles*, induce us to think it such a Marriage as the Gentiles esteemed illegal, and consequently an union the civil Magistrate did not authorize, which would bring us round again to *concubinage*, from whence we set out: for by these words he only meant that it was disreputable and scandalous amongst them, not such as was contrary to the Laws†.

The *fornication* then in question was a scandalous *marriage*. And being altogether unsuitable to a Christian’s profession, we find ‡

\* 1 Cor. v. 1.

† “That the marrying of a Son in Law and a Mother in Law was not prohibited by the Laws of the Roman Empire, may be seen in Tully: but yet it was looked on as so scandalous and infamous, that it never had any countenance from practice. His words, in his oration *pro Cluentia*, § 4. are so agreeable to the present case, that it may not be amiss to set them down. *Nabii Genero Socrus, nullis auspiciis, nullis auctoribus. O scelus incredibile, et, præter hanc unam, in omni vita inauditum!*” LOCKE, on the place.

‡ See the second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. ii.

that

that the offender, on St. Paul's remonstrance, took advantage of the Laws of divorce then in use, to shew his penitence.

All, therefore, we learn from this famous Case, is this general truth, corroborative of the foregoing argument, that where a pretended Marriage is solemnized in defiance of any Law, divine or human, which has a right to regulate the terms of the contract, it never was that union which God declares to be indissoluble, but one virtually void at the very making; and that the enacting its dissolution by a positive Law is only declarative of the Law of right reason and Religion concerning it.

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

**T**HE tendency of the foregoing discourse is to shew, that the Legislature, in the Law concerning Marriage, was so far from unsettling the rights of Religion, that it supported and enforced them. The Legislature has, indeed, been defended on other principles.

It has been said, that this Law, which *annuls* illegal Marriages, concerns itself only with their *civil effects*; and meddles not with the conscience of the parties; who may be still bound by the religion of the contract, when all the civilities are dissolved. And this casuistry, it seems, has the authority of the bishops STILINGFLEET and FLEETWOOD for its support. The former of these learned men expresses himself in this manner: “Marriage  
“being a contract of a civil and public nature, it is very just  
“and fitting that the Civil Society and the Christian Church should  
“appoint rules and orders for the decent performance of it, and  
“may appoint penalties to the breakers of those rules; so far as  
“to illegitimate the Children born of such marriages, which is  
“*nulling* the contract as to the *civil effect* of it. But I do not  
“see how either Church or State can null the CONTRACT AS TO  
“CONSCIENCE, SO AS TO MAKE IT LAWFUL FOR SUCH PERSONS TO  
“MARRY OTHERS\*.”

\* Miscell. Discourses, p. 73.

This determination, when applied to vindicate this act of civil power, seems to have a very extraordinary aspect; as fixing the imputation of injury, to Society and Religion, in the very attempt to throw it off.

It intangles the Parties irregularly contracting, between two Authorities. They are deprived by Law of all the civil benefits consequent on Marriage; and are at the same time bound by Conscience to hold the contract indissoluble.

If they follow Conscience, Society is like to suffer by throwing bars in the way of the marriage state: If they follow Convenience, under the shelter of Law, they violate the duties of Religion.

It is of moment, therefore, to examine a doctrine supported by so reverend Authority, and which appears to be attended with such manifest absurdity.

I apprehend the conceit may have arisen from not distinguishing a real difference in the general nature of Contracts. One kind there is into which a Man *may lawfully enter*, without observing the conditions which the laws prescribe to contracts, it undertakes to support and vindicate. There is another, into which a man *may not lawfully enter*, without observing the conditions

Of the first sort are those which concern the sale and alienation of real property. If such be transacted by a *verbal* form only, when the law requires a *written*, I apprehend no *civil effects will follow*; though the parties be obliged in justice and good faith to perform the terms of their agreement.

Of the second sort is that of *Marriage*. If this be entered into by any other form than what the Laws of Society prescribe, no obligation will follow, in Conscience. In the preceding discourse I have attempted to shew, that Marriage is of this sort: that, without the sanction and concurrence of the Magistrate, neither divine nor human laws permit the parties to enter on the contract. The  
legal.

legal incapacity therefore occasions an original *nullity*, which a positive law only declares and supports. So that Conscience is, in this case, no further concerned than to oblige the Party *deluding* to make civil reparation for the accidental injuries accruing, by his profanation of the rite, to the Party *deluded*: But as to the Contract itself, this not receiving its essential quality of indissolubility till made on the terms which civil laws prescribe, it was null and void from the beginning.

The authority of parents, the harmony of families, the peace of Society, all seem to require the dissolution of personal contracts of this kind illegally transacted. The wisest of all Lawgivers has fully declared himself to be of this opinion in a case purely and entirely religious, in the most awful of all contracts, Vows made to the Almighty: For, in conformity to the genius of the Mosaic Religion, God indulged his chosen People in frequent contracts or intercourse with him, by Vows. Now the Code of this Divine Lawgiver expressly decrees, that “if a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, BEING IN HER FATHER’S HOUSE IN HER YOUTH; and her Father hear her vow, and her bond, wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her Father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her Father DISALLOW her in the day that he heareth: not any of her vows or of her bonds, wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and THE LORD SHALL FORGIVE HER, BECAUSE HER FATHER DISALLOWED HER \*.” He goes on, in the same manner, to give the like privileges to the *Husband*.

Here we see a bond, in its own nature the most irremissible, entered into according to the genius, and by the direction, of Religion: Yet if it be opposed, though but by human considerations, by those to whom the contracting party owes duty and obedience, and under whose care and protection she remains, it becomes void

\* Numbers xxx. 3. seqq.

as if it had been never made. The Parent, or the Husband the natural Guardian, may confirm or annul it, just as he sees convenient: but it never became a real indissoluble bond, till, by their acquiescence, it had received its essential nature.

On the whole, it appears, that there are two kinds of contracts in use amongst men; one of which it is not so much as lawful to enter into without the magistrate's allowance; and of this kind is **MARRIAGE**, which therefore, so irregularly made, becomes null and void from the beginning. The other kind may be lawfully transacted, without following the Magistrate's prescribed rule; and therefore, this, indeed, will bind in conscience, though no civil effects arise from it.



S E R M O N S

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V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S

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O C C A S I O N S.

Vol. V.

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T O

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lady MANSFIELD.

M A D A M,

**Y**OU ought not to think strange of an address of this kind from a *Churchman*, to the Grand-daughter of that great Magistrate, who, while he held the Seals for the King and Constitution, besides the most exemplary attention to the proper business of his Office, was elegantly ambitious to give the last polish to his Country, by a patronage of Learning and Science. Into this equal passion he resolved all his private satisfactions. He took early into his notice, and continued long in his protection, every great Name in Letters and Religion, from CUDWORTH, who died in the reign of Charles the Second, to PRIDEAUX, who lived under George the First. It was the care and culture of an Age: and in spite of a dissolute, abandoned Court, he made the reign of Charles the Second to be, what it is now likely to be always esteemed, OUR GOLDEN AGE OF LITERATURE.

The glory of bearing this relation to so *faithful a Guardian of the human Faculties in their non-age*, Providence, in reward of your virtues, hath doubled, in a still nearer relation to One, who, in his high Station, may with the same justice be esteemed the great support of Civil Liberty; and is now engaged in the like generous task for the very BEING of a free Community, which the other so successfully accomplished for that chief Ornament of it, LITERATURE and SCIENCE.

But the honours you derive from others, you preserve untarnished, by the splendor of those you have acquired for yourself, in the course of a sober and enlightned Piety; which makes you an example to the best of your Sex, as the patriotic Virtues of your illustrious Consort will make him, to the wisest of his.

I have the honour to be,

M A D A M,

Your L A D Y S H I P ' s

Most obliged,

And faithful Servant,

Dec. 24, 1766.

W. GLOUCESTER.

**NATURAL AND CIVIL EVENTS THE INSTRUMENTS  
OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.**

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**A**

**S E R M O N**

**P R E A C H E D**

**AT LINCOLN'S-INN-CHAPEL,**

**On the first public FAST-DAY after the Calamity of Lisbon,**

**MDCCCLV.**



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# S E R M O N I.

*Natural and Civil Events the Instruments of God's Moral Government.*

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LUKE XIII. 1, 2, &c.

THERE WERE PRESENT, AT THAT SEASON, SOME THAT TOLD HIM OF THE GALILEANS, WHOSE BLOOD PILATE HAD MINGLED WITH THEIR SACRIFICES.

AND JESUS ANSWERING, SAID UNTO THEM, SUPPOSE YE THAT THESE GALILEANS WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL THE GALILEANS BECAUSE THEY SUFFERED SUCH THINGS ?

I TELL YOU, NAY : BUT EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

OR THOSE EIGHTEEN, UPON WHOM THE TOWER OF SILOAM FELL, AND SLEW THEM, THINK YE THAT THEY WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL MEN THAT DWELT IN JERUSALEM ?

I TELL YOU, NAY : BUT EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

THIS solemn reproof hath been commonly understood, and often quoted, as a condemnation of the opinion which ascribes “ the general calamities effected by natural or civil causes, to God's displeasure against sin ;” but surely, with little reason, for that .

that opinion is founded in the very essence of Religion. What the text condemns is the superstitious abuse of it, which uncharitably concludes, that "the sufferers in a general calamity are greater sinners than other men."

That this was the case, I shall endeavour to shew—from the character of the speaker—from the state and circumstances of the hearers—and from the very words of the text itself.

1. He who goeth about to instruct others in the knowledge of God, whether commissioned from Heaven or prompted by his own Charity, must needs conceive that the moral Governor of the universe, whose essential character it is, not to *leave himself without a witness*, doth frequently employ the physical and civil operations of our system, to support and reform the moral. For such a Governor will manifest his dominion in whatever world he is pleased to station and exercise his accountable and probationary creatures. In man's state and condition here, natural and civil events are the proper instruments of moral government. The teacher therefore of Religion, or of a moral Governor, will be naturally led to inculcate this truth, that general calamities, though events merely physical or civil, were (amongst other ends) ordained by the Author of all nature to serve for the scourge of moral disorders. For to suppose, that physical or civil events, whether friendly or adverse, such as peace or war, fertility or dearth, health or pestilence, are the proper instruments of reward and punishment, and yet, that God doth not so employ them, but will rather have recourse to what we call miraculous operations, is an unwarranted and indeed disrespectful notion of divine Wisdom; as implying a kind of incapacity in the Almighty to fit the natural to the moral system in such a manner as to make the former a ready instrument for the regulation of the latter.

2. If, from the character of the speaker, we turn to the state and condition of the hearers, we shall see further reason to acquiesce in this conclusion. The Jews, of all people upon earth, were best justified in ascribing national calamities to the anger of offended Heaven.

Heaven. They were of a Race long accustomed to receive rewards and punishments through the instrumentality of Nature; and of a Religion which more solemnly and exactly dispensed them; for the most part indeed, they were miraculously enforced; yet frequently too, administered in the common order and course of Nature: so that such a people, whose sacred books bore testimony in every page to the punishment of crimes by pestilence, by famine, and the sword, could never hesitate a moment to conclude, that the calamities of the wicked Galileans were a mark of God's displeasure against sin.

3. Lastly, the very words of the reproof [*—except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*], evidently imply, that amongst the many ends effected in the administration of Nature, this was one, to express God's displeasure at human iniquities, in order to bring men to REPENTANCE—*except ye REPENT, ye shall all likewise perish*: that is, *perish* for the same cause (your sins), and by the same instrument (the Roman power). In which it appears, that our blessed Lord alluded to his own prediction, of the exterminating vengeance impending over the whole Nation by the arms of Vespasian.

But now, if the belief of a moral end, in these general calamities, be a principle of Religion, proper to be inculcated, to support the reverence due to the moral Governor of the world; What was it, you will ask, that could deserve so solemn and so severe a reproof as our Lord's words are confessed to convey, on this occasion?

The answer is easy. It was that detestable superstition, which so often accompanies, and so fatally infects, this generous principle of Religion; the superstition of ascribing public calamities, not to God's displeasure against sin in general, but to his vengeance on the persons of the unhappy sufferers; who, for some fancy or other, this Superstition concludes to be greater sinners than other men.

This deserved all the severity of our Lord's censure, as it implied gross ignorance in the nature of the punishment; and betrayed a malignity of heart which defeated the very end of the dispensation.

1. When Sodom and Gomorra were destroyed by a fire from Heaven, and the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan extirpated by the command of God, who furnished the instruments, which he employed, with extraordinary powers for their destruction, the people of God were authorised to conclude, that those nations were sinners above all other men; and, consequently, that their punishment was inflicted for their own immeasurable iniquities, as well as for a warning and example to the rest of mankind. But when God, by the admirable direction of his general providence, so adjusts the circumstances of the natural and moral systems, as to make the events in the former to serve for the regulation of the latter, we must, in all reason, conceive that such events are principally designed as alarms and warnings to a careless inattentive world; and that their moral purpose was rather general example than particular vengeance: for the attaining of which end, it is sufficient for us to believe, that those who suffer are sinners deserving punishment; not that they are greater sinners than those who have escaped; possibly much less, as the preservation of these was necessary for the carrying on some other great and inscrutable design of Providence, in the more general government of the moral world.

From all this, it appears, that though, indeed, we be allowed, on the soberest principles of reason, to consider such unhappy sufferers as the criminal object of an offended Master; yet are we by no means authorised on any principles, either of reason or religion, to conclude that they are more criminal than others.

2. This leads me to another reason of the severity of our Lord's reproof; the extreme uncharitableness of this wicked superstition: For when once we begin to estimate the degree of demerit by the frequency or severity of the punishment, and the degree of God's disfavour in proportion to the demerit, these our distressed brethren will be no longer the object of our pity, but of our scorn and aversion, as the abandoned and the outcasts of Heaven. And when superstition is once got into this train, so frequent and general are the  
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the calamities of human life, that Christian communities, from a brotherhood of love, would soon degenerate into a desperate crew of miscreants, each rejoicing in the pains, and triumphing in the miseries of others.

3. A third reason of the severity of the reproof is, That this superstition has a direct tendency to defeat the very end of the chastisement. It is inflicted to rouse, to wake, and to alarm a drowsy, inattentive world; to beget, in those who have escaped, humility and circumspection; which, by a timely repentance, may avert the vengeance hovering round them. But when men, by this wretched error, are become so debauched as to fancy, that the unhappy, on whom the evil falls, are *sinners above all others*, they no longer consider the punishment as a warning of some approaching mischief, but as a passed vengeance, in which themselves are but remotely concerned, and have therefore no need to scrutinize their own conduct, or disturb their quiet with self-apprehensions. Thus the gracious purpose of Heaven being defeated, and the hand of mercy stretched out in vain, an exterminating vengeance follows, and the dreadful scene closes in a final destruction.

This was the case of these very men to whom the reproof of Jesus was addressed. They were far gone in the superstition here condemned. They had long considered general disasters in this absurd and impious light: and the suffering Galileans supported them in the satisfaction they took in their own ways. Exemplary warnings became lost upon them; and every fresh gleam of divine mercy only served to ripen them into the speedy objects of his justice.

Things were now at a crisis; and the last *warning-voice from Heaven* was given in the case of the Galileans, suffering by that very scourge, the Roman power, which stood ready at the door to drive and sweep away their very name and nation. And now the gracious Saviour of the world exerts this last effort of his goodness towards them, in an explanation of the nature of these punishments: He shews that their principal purpose was for their admonition

nition and amendment, to awake them to repentance, and an abhorrence of their ways; which if neglected or delayed, *they too should perish*, and in a more general desolation.

But the *day of grace* was past: they were deaf to Reason, to Nature, and to Religion. Their doom was now pronounced; and that instrument of God's vengeance, the Imperial *eagle*, scenting the *carcass* \* from afar, came down with an exterminating wing on this devoted Nation, already more than half destroyed by its intestine vices and corruptions.

The contemplation of this awful judgement is at this time so peculiarly useful to Us, that I almost scruple to call you away from an attention to it, though it be to set before you a view of the wonders of divine Providence, which this PRINCIPLE presents and opens to us.

For what I proposed, after explaining my text, was to shew, that the doctrine of it, which ascribes THE GENERAL CALAMITIES, ARISING FROM NATURAL CAUSES, TO GOD'S DISPLEASURE AGAINST SIN, displays his glory in the fairest colours, and establishes man's peace and happiness on the most solid foundations.

And, secondly, that the present fashionable opinion, THAT NATURAL EVENTS PROCEED NOT FROM A MORAL RULER, AND HAVE NO RELATION TO MORAL GOVERNMENT, is the source of perpetual disquiets and alarms to the abandoned and forlorn inhabitants of the earth.

1. First then, we may observe, that the application of natural events to moral government, in the common course of Providence (a disposition of things to be distinguished from that whereby God, in the constitution of universal nature, hath annexed happiness to virtue—and to vice, distress and misery) connects the character of Lord and Governor of the intellectual world, with that of Creator and Preserver of the material: A consideration of great use, as for other religious purposes respecting God's glory, so particularly for

\* Matt. xxiv. 28.

this, that it redresses the old Manichean impiety, so derogatory to it, which makes an evil Principle a sharer with him in the direction of the Universe: For the constant undisturbed course of the natural system, when compared with the disorders of the moral, first gave birth to that monstrous imagination. Now this doctrine, of the PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY, the direction of natural events to moral government, obviates all irreligious suspicions; and not only satisfies us that there is but one Governor of both systems, but that both systems are conducted by one scheme of Providence.

To form the constitution of Nature in such a manner that, without controlling or suspending its laws, it should continue through a long succession of ages to produce its physical revolutions, as they best contribute to the preservation and order of its own system, just at those precise periods of time when their effects, whether salutary or hurtful to man, may serve as instruments for the government of the moral world; *e. g.* that a foreign enemy, amidst our intestine broils, should desolate all the flourishing works of rural industry; that warring elements, in the stated order of natural government, should depopulate and tear in pieces a high-viced city, just in those very moments when moral government required a warning and example to be held out to a careless world, is giving us the noblest as well as most astonishing idea of God's GOODNESS and JUSTICE.

Had the government of the moral system generally required the controul and alteration of natural laws in that sensible effect which we call a *miracle*\*, it might have argued defect of wisdom: Had the government of the natural system required the operation of such laws as would be always disturbing and defeating the sanctions of the moral, it might have argued defect of power. But where the

\* We can see but two necessary occasions of this extraordinary dispensation;—the one, to attest and support the truth of a *new Religion* coming from God; the other, to administer a *Theocratic government*. These are occasions worthy the divine Wisdom, and necessary in the nature of things.

stated laws of Physics, while they are promoting their own purpose, are, at the same time, so contrived as to support, invigorate, and enforce the sanctions of Religion, this, I say, must needs give us the noblest, as well as most astonishing idea, of God's wisdom and POWER.

Nor do the glories of this Dispensation afford less consolation and comfort of security to the truly pious man. For when it is understood, that the course of nature was, by the laws imposed upon it from the foundations of the world, so contrived as to co-operate with the laws of moral government, such an one, on the appearance of any of these public warnings to awake the nations from their lethargy of vice, will never be terrified and distracted with the vain apprehensions of an undistinguishing desolation, which is out of his power to avoid ; as being well assured, from the nature of the judgement, that a sincere purpose of amending the public manners will be able to avert the approaching vengeance.

Nor let men so rationally instructed in the ways of God suffer their well-placed confidence to be shaken by this plausible sophistry, " That it is utterly unphilosophical to suppose that a present and instantaneous change in our conduct can stop or avert a natural event, established, by a strong connected series of causes, which have kept operating ever since the foundations of the world." We can tell these pretending reasoners that our religious confidence is not derived from so absurd a principle, a principle erected on the narrow and unfaithful ground of superstition. Our conclusions are drawn from the most reasonable conceptions that man can entertain of his Creator and Lord : Who, when he made the world (in which all time was as an instant before him), the free determinations of the human Will, and the necessary effects of Laws physical, were so fitted and accommodated to one another, that a sincere repentance in the *moral* world should be sure to avert an impending desolation in the *natural* ; not by any present alteration or suspension of its established Laws, but by originally adjusting all their operations to all the foreseen circumstances of moral agency : So

as to make Matter and Motion (besides their other purposes) to serve for the regulation of the Understanding and Will. We should blush, let me tell them, to be thought so uninstructed in the nature of Prayer as to fancy it can work any temporary change in the dispositions of the Deity, who is the *same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*: Yet we are not ashamed to maintain, that God, in the chain of causes and effects, which not only sustains each system, but connects them all with one another, hath so wonderfully contrived, that the temporary endeavours of pious men shall procure good and avert evil, by means of that PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY which he hath willed to exist between moral actions and natural events.

Thus we see, these two essential doctrines of Religion, "God's JUDGMENTS in physical and civil events," and "the efficacy of the good man's PRAYER," stand equally on one and the same Principle, the belief of that original connexion between the natural and moral World.

And here let me expostulate with those unhappy men, who, from a confessed truth that these more general desolations proceed entirely from natural causes, have too confidently concluded that they cannot be esteemed the warnings of a moral Governor: and therefore, after having been most alarmed by them while they were impending, have been the first to ridicule their own imbecillity; which had led them, before they were aware, to the very brink of repentance. An instance of this unmanly conduct we saw amongst ourselves, when Heaven, in mercy, not long since shook a guilty land. A repetition of the stroke so alarmed and terrified its inhabitants, that, in their fright, they seemed in haste to give a specimen of their contrition and reformation. But a third shock not coming at the expected interval as that between the first and second, the rash project of amending their manners vanished like a morning mist; and they returned with equal speed to their accustomed follies and dissipations. And to what was all this owing but to a double blunder, unbecoming a *nation of Philosophers*? They had first entertained a false idea of these Warnings, as if they were  
phænomena

phænomena out of nature, prodigious and miraculous; and when they came to understand that they were only the effects of physical causes, they then, by as shameful an ignorance, concluded that they had nothing in them formidable or threatening to an impenitent World. Whereas a moderate share of NATURAL THEOLOGY would have taught them, that though these warnings by disasters were indeed the operations of the physical system, yet they were providentially connected with the moral, and pre-ordained to support its functions. But where was the wonder that that which began in Superstition should end in Irreligion? for, by a strange and monstrous kind of conception, extremes, in the moral world, are always begetting their opposites.

2. But now, in the last place, let us take a view of the state and situation of those men, who suppose that God does not uphold the World as the moral Ruler of it, but as the physical Dispenser only; and it is certain, that those, who deny these natural disasters to be connected with the moral system, can have no other idea of God's Government.

Such men, amidst all these dreadful warnings of alarming Nature, will find their condition to be most disconsolate and forlorn; their Principles having bereft them of those hopes which are ever springing in the breast of the religious man: who is taught both by Reason and Revelation to conclude, that these effects of God's displeasure against sin may be averted by sincere repentance. For though the irreligious Naturalist acknowledges a Governor of the universe, yet, as he supposes this Governor to direct all things by his natural attributes of *power* and *wisdom*, and not by his moral, of *goodness* and *justice*, his acknowledgment of a God affords him no more security against his fears than if there were no God at all; and that the universe lay entirely at the mercy of Chance or Destiny; because a mere physical Director having no respect to the system of Rationals, their preservation or destruction will not be dependent on their behaviour, but on the purposes of the physical system; the support of which (for aught this Philosopher can tell)

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may require the destruction of Mankind, instead of their preservation : and the very next shock of the disordered Globe work those necessary changes in Matter and Motion which may conclude in the ruin and annihilation of its inhabitants.

Thus the hapless Unbeliever, while disordered Nature is sounding in his ears, hath no where to fly for refuge from his terrors : he sees himself in a fatherless and abandoned World, exposed to all the rage of deaf and unrelenting Elements : He may find, indeed, support and comfort in Religion : but it is below the dignity of his Philosophic character to seek it along with the superstitious herd : it being unworthy *a man of Science* to suppose, that the system of Nature was created, and is conducted, to serve any other Purposes than its own ; or that the **SUBLIME PRINCIPLE OF ATTRACTION** was impressed upon Matter to bring about any other revolutions than of those vast bodies which are the objects of his learned contemplation.

In a word, every rational reflexion serves to establish the religious Principle of my text, as here explained.

It is shewn to be agreeable to Reason and to Religion, under the present constitution of things.

It is shewn to tend most to the glory of God, and to the peace and happiness of Man.

It is shewn, that that *vain philosophy*, which discards this Principle from its creed, dishonours Providence, and most distresses Human life.

What have we then to do, but to regulate our practice, and repose our confidence, on a Principle so well established. A sincere, a speedy and a perfect reformation will not fail to avert the anger of the Lord, now gone out against the sinful inhabitants of the Earth. I mean, a reformation of the general manners, where each of us, in our several stations, must concur to heal the breaches made in our excellent Constitution by our party-follies ; to oppose the enormous progress of avarice and corruption ; to check the wasting rage

for pleasure and amusement ; to shake off those unmanly luxuries crept in to domestic life, some for the gratification of our appetites, but more, for the display of our vanities.

When we have done this, we have done our part. And then these *terrors of the Lord* will cease ; or they will become harmless and even salutary to us. We shall, if it be our lot to meet that great day of *his coming*, foretold by our sacred Oracles, not only stand, with the man of morals, serene and fearless amidst the crash of falling worlds, but, with the religious man, become partaker of the *glories of the Lamb*, rise triumphant over them in those happier regions of perpetual stability and peace.

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H O U S E   o f   L O R D S.

JANUARY 30, 1760.



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## S E R M O N. II.

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ISAIAH xix. 13—14.

THE PRINCES OF ZOAN ARE BECOME FOOLS, THE PRINCES OF NOPH ARE DECEIVED ; THEY HAVE ALSO SEDUCED EGYPT——  
THE LORD HATH MINGLED A PERVERSE SPIRIT IN THE MIDST THEREOF.

THE Prophet is here foretelling the disgraces and calamities which God was then about to bring upon a sinful People, at that time the most renowned for the wisdom of their civil Policy.—*The Counsel of the wise Counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish*, saith the Prophet: for the JUDGMENT was attended with all those circumstances of savage brutality, which most disgrace Civil Wisdom: *I will set* (says God) *the Egyptians against the Egyptians ; and they shall fight every one against his Brother, and every one against his Neighbour ; City against City, and Kingdom against Kingdom.* How great a resemblance this denunciation of divine vengeance bears to the history of the grand Rebellion, every man, who is not an utter stranger to the most disgraceful epoch of our story,

story, will readily perceive; when *Brothers* of the same House, and *Neighbours* of the same City, hostilely separated into opposed Camps; when the Inhabitants of adjoining *Counties* divided, in mutual enmity, under their respective Leaders; and when the two *Kingdoms* of Scotland and Ireland renounced the protection of their common Sovereign, and insulted and invaded his imperial crown. For when a breach is once made in a well-framed Constitution, perfected by the wisdom, and regulated on the experience of ancient Policy, the confusion which follows it is always more outrageous, and frequently more incurable, than disorders arising in the looser and less perfect Forms of Government.

The miseries foretold in this Prophecy are represented as inflicted by the avenging hand of GOD.—*Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt—The Lord shall smite Egypt.* The mercy which followed is equally represented as the work of his all-gracious hand—*He shall SMITE and HEAL it* \*.

And thus, the total destruction of our Constitution, and the sudden and surprising recovery of it, when things were most desperate, have been ever considered, by serious men, as a manifest indication of the hand of God, which first in justice *smites*, and then, with equal mercy, *heals* and restores.

Indeed, all who believe the *moral government* of God, how much soever they may differ concerning his mode of administering it among Particulars, and how obscure soever his ways may appear in the tracts of private life, yet concur to acknowledge and to revere his visible interposition in the revolutions of States and Empires.

In the early years of this returning Solemnity, while mens thoughts and expressions were under the influence of recent passions; the whole of the celebration might not, perhaps, so well answer the ends of a public humiliation: when *Characters* on the one hand intemperately painted, and *Comparisons*, on the other,

\* Vcr. 22.

impiously invented, turned an act of Worship into a day of Contention. But these were the unruly workings of a storm just then subsided. Time, which so generally corrupts other religious Rites, hath given a sobriety and a purity to the returning celebrations of This.

And as Providence is commonly seen, even in its most uncommon Operations, to work by second Causes, the sagacity and prudence of those who have of late supplied this Place, have been more usefully employed in investigating and collecting these Causes: From whence, more salutary lessons may be gathered, for the use of civil life, than are to be met with in any History of public revolutions, where mere human agency is supposed to have done most.

James the 1st received the crown of England, with the seeming advantage, but indeed with the real inconvenience of succeeding to a line of imperious Monarchs, who, by a concurrence of various accidents, had been enabled to make bold incroachments on the liberty of the Subject, and the old genius of the Constitution. These incroachments had been almost sanctified by the regal glories of the last of that haughty race. But James, instead of providing against the impending mischiefs of so critical a situation, when a new interest then rising called loudly to set the balance even, took advantage of the Crown's over-weight, to advance those occasional acts of intemperate Prerogative into a regulated System of arbitrary power.

In these Mysteries of State he took early care to initiate his Son: who received them, when he came to the succession, with much more good faith than they were delivered to him by his Father; and (as on that account it happened) with more fatal consequences to himself. For, what was only Policy in James, became Religion in the Martyr Charles: and King-craft is made of much more ductile stuff than Church-bigotry; at least it knows when to yield and when to act inflexibly; whereas the Policy which is *not of this world*, nor, I am afraid, of the *other*, is apt to do both, unskilfully and perversely.

perversely. Thus James favoured the Hierarchy, as it was a buttress to the Crown ; Charles revered it as the Ordinance of Heaven : The Son therefore, to preserve the Order itself, fatally consented to exclude the Bishops from their seat in Parliament : but the Father would have avoided this error, and stopped the ruin in its first movement, since Bishops out of Parliament, he knew, could be of little service to his Prerogative. And, on the same principle, we may conclude, that, had he found them already out of Parliament, he would never have risked his Crown for their preservation. Yet this, the virtuous Son resolved to do ; and he stood the desperate hazard with the greatest complaisancy of Conscience.

If the civil rights of the People had for a long time been ill understood, or little regarded, the wonder was the less that the rights of Religion had been so grossly violated. These Princes held that all were to conform to the *Religion of the State* ; and that, for every man to worship God in his own way, the Father thought was a factious, and the Son, an impious invasion of the Supremacy.

Least of all shall we think it strange that, amidst these errors in Government, neither of these Princes attended to that large accession of property and power, which was silently, but rapidly, devolving on the People. So that by the time Charles was most intent to push forward his Father's despotic System, the People were become rich by a long commercial peace : and therefore less disposed to bear, and more able to repel, what they deemed to be oppression.

Under these circumstances, for fourteen years together, they modestly and constitutionally prosecuted the Claim of their Rights, in the Courts of Justice and in the Courts of Legislature. They sought redress by Law, but the fountain of Justice, by running through the Palace, was become corrupted. They sought redress in Parliament, which was often obtained ; but as often violated or evaded as it was obtained ; till, at length, the very door of redress was shut against them, and a long remission of Parliament deprived them

them of the last support of the miserable, the very *hope* of being relieved. For the ill-advised Sovereign chose to reign without Parliaments; poor and needy, in the stile of a Cappadocian Monarch,

*Mancipiis locuples, egens æris—*

rather than be the opulent Head of a free and a free-giving People.

The Treasury having been long exhausted, and thus kept un replenished, all men foresaw that on the least commotion, whether at home or abroad, a Parliament would be forced upon the Court. And the *Country Party*, as it was called, did not neglect to accelerate this remedy, by taking advantage of the indiscretions of a great Churchman, to kindle and inflame the liturgic heats in Scotland.

But as what was then called PURITANISM (which, in the subsequent confusions, split into many Sects of various denominations) was so intimately connected with this quarrel, and did so largely contribute to the confusions it produced, it may not be improper just to recount its origine and progress; the claims it made, and the treatment it received.

In the early times of Reformation, unhappy scruples arose amongst the Clergy concerning the *Government* of the national Church. But these captious men understood so little of religious rights, that they had no sooner formed a Party, than they thought themselves obliged in conscience to overthrow the established Hierarchy; and to erect what they called, the DISCIPLINE, in its place. Their first attack was by *remonstrances to Parliament*: and when that failed, by entering into criminal cabals, to extort, what, they found, would not be readily given up to them. But this factious Spirit, meeting with the able and vigorous administration of Elizabeth, was timely suppressed; and the very attempt to disturb so popular a Government brought upon them a general Odium.

And here, in passing, it may not be amiss to observe, that while these English PURITANS, who embraced the abominable opinion of Calvin concerning Predestination, were struggling with the State for an *Establishment*, the Dutch REMONSTRANTS, who were raised, at the same time, by Providence to free the Church of Christ from the impiety of this Doctrine, never contended for more than a *Toleration*.

Hitherto the fault lay entirely on their side ; who, in a seditious way, aimed at more than was their due. But they paid dearly for their folly ; for, in this unsuccessful struggle, they lost, as is commonly the case in party-quarrels, what they had the best pretence to demand. For when their Enthusiasm, as a new Sect, was reasonably abated, and their factious temper, as an old one, had been vigorously opposed ; they seemed well content to accept what they had at first wantonly rejected. But, they now met with an exasperated Government (too ready to return their insults), which, instead of complying with this more sober request, enacted a number of penal statutes, to compel their conformity to the established Worship.

When James succeeded to the Crown of England, he came South with much prejudice against these *Disciplinarians* ; from whose Brethren in the North he had undergone the most scandalous indignities ; so that he was sufficiently indisposed to remit or soften the rigour of these penal Laws. His Son detested the Puritans, as they were the declared enemies of his Favorite Prelacy ; and therefore, throughout the former part of his reign, treated them with such severity, (the Laws having made their enemies their judges, or, at least, their judges were become their enemies) that many of them abandoned their native Country for new settlements in America.

Mens civil and religious rights being thus equally trampled on, it is natural to believe, that, when the Country-interest first made head against the Court, the Patriots and the Puritans would meet  
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half-way, to act in concert against oppressive Authority: Their GRIEVANCES for violated rights, and, what is more, their PRINCIPLES in favour of the doctrine of resistance, being precisely the same.

And now, Religion and Liberty become the united cry, the fatal Scene began to open. The disturbances in Scotland forced the King back upon Parliaments. The first he called was ready to restore the Constitution, and preserve the rights of the Crown, when he unskilfully dissolved it. The next, into whose hands he fell, never remitted of their remorseless vengeance till they had destroyed the King, the Constitution, and Themselves.

It unfortunately happened, that the Sovereign's frequent breach of faith had made the Patriots so diffident of his Word, that they would find no ground on which to begin a reformation, but that whereon, if ever they became factious, they might erect a Tyranny of their own: I mean that fatal, unconstitutional Law, which impowered the Parliament to sit till it should be pleased to dissolve itself.

When this point was secured, they began indeed as if they had no other intention than to reform those gross enormities of Prerogative, which had well nigh overturned our free Constitution, and rendered it despotic. And in this generous labour the greatest and wisest in those two august assemblies heartily concurred: All they who afterwards became the temporary Guard and most shining Ornament of that unhappy Monarch's military Court. And what was ineffectual to the safety of their Master; they gained for themselves that lasting glory in the records of History, which disinterested Virtue only can procure.

The King had now made ample satisfaction for all his former miscarriages: And our free State was fully vindicated, in a regular and parliamentary way. The two Houses had now obtained all the security for the enjoyment of their recovered rights, which the nature of the Constitution would afford; and were, therefore, in all

reason, now to perform their promises, of “making the King, as soon as he should be pleased to give them this security, *the greatest and most glorious Monarch of his time.*”

But the King made his concessions with so ill a grace, that they only served to remind the Public of his former breaches of faith, and to revive their diffidence in the royal Word.

This supplied the Demagogues of the House with a shew of necessity for some *further security* against the King’s return to his old mode of Government. But all, which, by the nature of the Constitution, could be given, had been given already. Yet this would not induce these men to desist: they held it pardonable if they themselves made *one breach* in the Constitution, when it was to prevent the Crown from ever making more; and therefore, with great confidence in their Cause, they demanded the MILITIA.

When Charles, who, till now, kept granting all they required, had got them at this advantage, the making *breaches* in the Constitution (the very thing which gave them all their credit against him), he suddenly stopt short. He found himself in a condition to divide the People with them; and, what was more to his reputation, to draw the wiser and worthier part of the Parliament along with him. An appeal was now made to the Sword, and a war immediately ensued.

At this sad period, when *Patriotism* had degenerated into *Faction*, the King for once acted ably, and seized the lucky opportunity of putting his Parliament in the wrong.

And in the wrong they surely were. Yet, in the majority of those who demanded this *unconstitutional* security, there was not any formed design against the Monarchy, it was rather an ill-timed provision and overcare for their own safety\*.

\* One who perhaps had this formed design speaks the very sense of those who had it not, in these words—if a war of this nature must be determined by treaty, &c. Ludlow, fol. ed. p. 52, at the top.

I suppose it to be a truth unquestioned in Politics, “ That the “ **UTMOST SECURITY** which a Constitution can give for the obli- “ vance of a public regulation, is a **GOOD SECURITY.**” The indemnity of Particulars, the private safety of Those who extorted these royal concessions, is another matter. The Patriots plainly understood they had mortally offended a vindictive King ; for though the Martyr could forgive, yet the Monarch was of a different temper ; and that, sooner or later, they or their families might fall a sacrifice to his resentments : For well they knew, that, although the People would be still likely enough to interpose in behalf of *Patriotism* against the violation of Parliamentary Establishments ; yet there were small hopes that they would ever be brought to move in Court quarrels, on the private complaints of the *Patriots*.

This was Policy, indeed ; but a Policy disclaimed by Public Virtue. For when the question is reduced to this, whose interest is to take place ; that of the Public, or of Particulars ? the *true* Patriot will not hesitate in his choice. But the *Falſe* did here, what is the essential of his Policy to do, he covered his own interest under that of the Public : and being well persuaded that himself was in danger, he endeavoured to persuade others, that the Constitution was so likewise. And he was but too successful in the imposition.

This may seem strange ; for nothing is more placable than a provoked People, when they have brought their Governors to reason. But we must remember, the Patriots had a powerful Ally in this quarrel ; who having yet received no satisfaction at all, were well disposed, and at the same time well able, by the nature of their Profession, to keep up the rage and apprehensions of the People. This neglect of their so trusty Coadjutors may, at first sight, appear still more strange ; That they, who had united in a common quarrel ; whose several rights had been alike invaded ; who had laboured under equal sufferings ; and who, from their first confederacy, had served the **CAUSE** with equal zeal and success ; that of these con-  
federated

federated Parties, the One should have gained every thing which Patriots could desire, and the Other only (which, but to the malice of a Puritan, could be no satisfaction at all) the exclusion of the Bishops from their seat in Parliament. For what less could be expected, when the *Patriots* had procured the abolition of illegal and tyrannic Courts; a Declaration of the People's Rights; and a triennial Parliament; than that the *Puritans* should recover, what the law of nature itself had given them, a full Toleration for their *Discipline* and mode of worship? But so little was this part of natural law understood, that it is very probable, had a *Toleration* been demanded by the Patriots, the King and his Divines would have broken with the Parliament on that point, just as they afterwards did, on the abolition of Episcopacy. It is very certain, that had the King offered a *Toleration* to the Puritans, they would have rejected it on the very same principle: For it was an axiom in the Theology of both, THAT TO CONNIVE AT ERROR WAS TO PARTAKE IN THE GUILT OF IT. Hence the King was naturally inclined to persecute Sectaries; and the Puritans to overturn Establishments. Now, things being in this train, when the Patriots, anxious for themselves, as before for the Public, insisted on further security for the royal concessions, they found an easy way of bringing the Puritans (who as yet had gained nothing) into their measures; which was, by making one of their *unconstitutional securities* to be, the ABOLITION of EPISCOPACY.

But the sword was already drawn; and not in behalf of the CONSTITUTION on either side; for the King, who now professed to defend it, still mistook his own Administration for it; and the Parliament, which levied war on a point *unconstitutional*, was soon governed by men who professed to overthrow it; so that the sword was not likely to be sheathed, till Tyranny on the one hand, or Anarchy on the other, had introduced a new species of slaughter in place of the old; and Judicial murders had succeeded to the Military.

It

It is true, that in the course of this mutual carnage, each Party, in its turn, offered and accepted proposals for peace. But this was not from any real desire or hope of obtaining it, but to cajole the People to whom that side would have been extreme odious, which had appeared averse to laying down their arms. However, partly through the experienced calamities of war, and partly from mens better knowledge of one another, by means of those reciprocal messages for peace, the better sort of Courtiers grew more averse to despotic rule, and the honest Patriots more disgusted with popular devices ; which might have produced some good effect, had not these dawnings of returning sense and sobriety been suddenly overcast by the unexpected appearance of a New Party, rising out of the ferment of the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE ; A swarm of armed Enthusiasts, who out-witted the Patriots, out-prayed the Puritans, and out-fought the Cavaliers ; and, with the most rapid progress, overturned and desolated all before them, in their extreme haste to set up the fifth Monarchy of King Jesus.

Thus fell the unhappy King in a popular storm ; raised, indeed, by himself ; but inflamed by his enemies, even after he had corrected the disorder of those unruly Elements which gave it birth, and were now ready, as he saw too late, to bear down all things in their course.

The King had many Virtues, but all, of so unfociable a complexion as to do him neither service nor credit.

His *Religion*, in which he was sincerely zealous, was over-run with Scruples : and the simplicity, if not the purity, of his *Morals*, was debased by Casuistry.

His *natural affections* (a rare virtue in that high station) were so excessive as to render him a slave to all his Kin : and his *social*, so moderate as only to enable him to lament, not to preserve his friends and servants.

His *Knowledge* was extensive, though not exact : and his *Courage* clear, though not keen : yet his Modesty far surpassing his magnanimity,

nimity, his *Knowledge* only made him obnoxious to the doubts of his more ignorant Ministers: and his *Courage*, to the irresolution of his less adventurous Generals.

In a word, his Princely qualities were neither great enough nor bad enough to succeed in that most difficult of all attempts, the enslaving a free and jealous People.

The full conviction of this truth made LAUD (who was not so despicable a Politician as we commonly suppose him) upon seeing his Coadjutor, STRAFFORD, led out to slaughter, lament his fate in these emphatic and indignant words,—*He served a Prince who knew not how to be, nor to be made, Great* \*.

The execrable Parricide which followed, cannot, indeed, in strictness of speech, be charged upon the Patriots and Puritans; who, when it was too late, did all in their power to prevent it: However, without changing the nature of things, they cannot be totally acquitted of that horrid impiety; since their rejecting, from selfish and perverse motives, the full reparation the King had made to the *Public*, because he would not agree to an *unconstitutional security* for THEMSELVES, was the unavoidable occasion of all the mischiefs that ensued. For though no man shall be made to answer for the evils which, through human perversity, arise from the faithful discharge of his duty: yet no casuistry will acquit him, even of the undesigned mischiefs which spring naturally from his unjust pursuits †.

\* History of his own Life and Troubles, p. 178.

† Col. Axtel, one of the Regicides, said at the Gallows,—“ I must truly tell you that before these late wars, it pleased the Lord to call me by his grace, *through the work of the MINISTRY*; and afterwards keeping a day of humiliation in fasting and prayer with MR. SAMUEL ASH, MR. LOVE, MR. WOODCOCK, and other MINISTERS in *Laurence Lane*, they did so clearly state the cause of the Parliament, that I was fully convinced in my own conscience of the *justice of the war*, and thereupon engaged in the Parliament service, which (as I did and do believe) was the CAUSE OF THE LORD; I ventured my life freely for it, and now DYE FOR IT.” State Tryals, vol. II. 3d ed. p. 415.

These confusions kept increasing, under different Forms, each more ridiculous or more horrid than the other, till this miserable Nation, now become the scorn and opprobrium of the whole Earth, at length grew tired, rather than ashamed, of its repeated follies. In this temper they hastily recalled the Heir of the Monarchy : And as the cause of all their miseries had been the insisting on unreasonable conditions from the Crown, they did like men driven out of one extreme, who never take breath till they have plunged themselves into another, they strove to atone for their unjust demands upon the virtuous Father by the most lavish concessions to his flagitious Son ; who succeeded to the Inheritance with all those advantages of an undefined Prerogative, which an ambitious Prince could wish for the foundation of an arbitrary System. A sad preface to the Friends of Liberty, that their generous labours were not yet at an end ! Indeed, within less than half a century, the old family-projects, taken up again by the two last princes of this line, revived the public quarrel. But it was conducted under happier Auspices, not by the assistance of SECTARIES, but by the NATIONAL CHURCH : and concluded in the final establishment of a free Constitution.

And now, to reflect a little on this melancholy Story. Never did Piety and Politics, in their friendly association for the public service, project any thing more useful to Church and State, than the institution of this annual Solemnity ; which serves to keep awake an awful sense of Providence, to create an abhorrence of licentiousness, and to cherish a generous but sober affection for Liberty.

Nor was there ever any period in the English Story so fruitful of important Lessons for the use of civil Life as that which, with so much shame, we now commemorate ; and which, but for this use, the wisdom of Government would, I conceive, have, long ago, buried in oblivion.

Of the various instructions, which both PATRIOTS and MINISTERS may gather from these crimes and follies of our Forefathers,

I shall beg leave but just to mention two or three of the most important.

I. The PATRIOT may learn, from the *immediate* cause of the War, that when, at any time, his brave and successful struggles for his Country have restored again the disordered balance of power in a free Community, he may learn, I say, to be content with that Security for the enjoyment of his labours which the nature of the Constitution affords; and not think of demanding such branches of the Prerogative in hostage, which, if given, would destroy that very balance, for the preservation of which, he pretends to require them. On this rock the Patriots of that time ran; which cast them, stript of their popularity, on the unfaithful and abandoned ground of their Adversaries: For what material difference is there between acting UNCONSTITUTIONALLY for the sake of monarchic power, and acting thus for the sake of popular? And whenever the Patrons of liberty shall give this advantage to the Enemies of it, as much of that popularity which the first lose, the other will gain; and so, the contest becoming more equal, *Force* alone must decide: which cannot but end in the ruin of the Constitution, after it is become a principle with both, to alter and unsettle it.

II. The PATRIOT may learn from the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE, to beware of all innovations not strictly *constitutional*, how right soever they may appear to the friends of Justice, or equal to the friends of Liberty. And could any thing be more specious than that fair distribution of power and profit, in what was called the NEW MODEL? The members of the two Houses had ingrossed to themselves all the posts and offices in the Military. This raised suspicions amongst their people, that men who got so greatly by the war would never be very forward to put an end to it. Hereupon the Parliament, in a fit of affected generosity, passed an *Ordinance*, which separated the interests of the two bodies, by not permitting a Member of either House to receive a Commission in the Army.

Army. But what was the effect of this separation? A deluge of independent Republicans broke at once into that Camp, which was formed, or pretended to be formed, for the *defence of King and Parliament*. Such was the sad issue of an UNCONSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENCE arising from the *new model*! And all this was, to avoid the imaginary danger of a *dependence strictly constitutional*: that is, a *dependence* of the parts, on one another; a *dependence* as necessary for the regular motions of the civil machine of free Government, as any the like subordinate combinations in physical or artificial bodies.

I. Again, MINISTERS OF STATE may learn, from the faults of Charles's administration, not to dispense with the royal Word for the sake of some present convenience; which (besides the public mischiefs that attend the violation of a thing so sacred) is indeed the cancelling THEIR OWN best security. When the King's ablest servant had, in the great wants of the Treasury, encouraged his Master to break his faith, so often pledged to his Parliament, never more to exert any of those branches of baleful Prerogative, which they had so often fulminated; he little suspected that he was opening the way to his own ruin, by habituating his royal Master to think slightly of his promises, in the number of which was protection to himself. And when he understood the whole severity of his fate, which this policy had brought upon him, it was with no good grace that he exclaimed, *Put not your trust in Princes, for there is no FAITH in them.*

II. Another lesson MINISTERS OF STATE may learn from the transactions of those times, of no less importance to their Master's interest, and their own honour, which is, never in their Sovereign's distresses to throw their own miscarriages upon Him, and to turn all his graces upon themselves. A faithful servant to his Prince (and such a one the two Charles's had) will procure friends for his Master; and provide for himself only through his Master's favour: such a Servant will give honest Counsels; yet if others be followed, he will excuse, with all his wit and au-

thority, the share his Master had in promoting them. But it was the hard fate of the Martyr Charles to be commonly served by Ministers so ungenerous, that they were the first to decry unsuccessful Counsels though given by themselves, and to throw them upon the obstinacy, the bigotry, and the uxorious folly of the Sovereign. A baseness of conduct which contributed as much to make the King odious to the Public, as all the intrigues of the Long Parliament. It is no wonder that these unfaithful Servants took the advantage of his misfortunes to press him for dignities and places of trust and power, at a time when such things afforded little benefit to themselves, yet were of infinite disservice to their Master. For these ill-timed honours exasperated the personal enmities of the Leaders in Parliament against these Ministers, and indisposed them to any terms of accommodation with the King : For they had reasonably laid their account to share with the Courtiers, in the Sovereign's good graces, whenever a Peace should be brought about : but now they were made desperate, by finding that the King had nothing left to give.

In the last place, I would observe, that this struggle between King and Parliament, before each side flew to Arms, will serve to confirm a general truth of much importance to all Parties, That, in civil contentions, the OPPOSITION (to use a modern term) is much apter to degenerate into faction, than a MINISTRY to run into despotic measures. For the very attempt to decry an Administration, will, by degrees, render it sage ; but the application of *ministerial* power against an *Opposition*, makes *Opposition* popular at once ; and popularity presently runs into licence. Thus, in fact, it happened here. Before either side had taken the field, the King's Administration was grown public-spirited, and the Parliament was become a Faction.

To conclude all, Let no lover of his Country be too ready to take scandal at the contentions to which free States are so obnoxious. Civil commotions have the same use, in the moral world, that  
stormy

stormy and tempestuous seasons have in the physical. In the stagnation of a continued calm, the best system sickens and decays; but these periodic agitations stifle corruption in the seed, give new vigour to the languid Constitution, and enable the vital Principles of it to perform their destined operations. It is true, indeed, when a storm is let loose upon either System, it ravages and destroys what it was meant to support and actuate. The *System of Nature* has the Providence of God to curb the blind violence of stubborn matter, which else, in the impetuosity of its course, would soon reduce itself to its former Chaos. The *Political System* has nothing but the Providence of Government to sustain it against its own fury, from falling into Anarchy. But the Providence of Government is weak and bounded; and needeth all the assistance of good subjects to strengthen its hands, and enforce obedience to its insulted Authority. It was the rejection of this salutary duty in some, and the careless discharge of it in others, which, at the fatal period we now commemorate, was the last cause of all the desolation that ensued.



**A**  
**S E R M O N**

**PREACHED BEFORE THE**  
**INCORPORATED SOCIETY**

**FOR THE**  
**PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS;**

**ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1766.**



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## S E R M O N III.

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REVELATION of St. JOHN, chap. x. ver. 11.

AND HE SAID UNTO ME, THOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN, BEFORE  
MANY PEOPLES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES, AND KINGS.

**G**O *and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* was the great Commission intrusted by our Divine Master to his Disciples. And we know how faithfully they discharged their trust; these latter ages of extended Commerce having discovered the most evident marks and traces of their footsteps, in every Region, how remote soever, of the then known World.

But there was a NEW WORLD to be disclosed, another Hemisphere to be explored; though reserved for those daring Adventurers who in these later times have pierced through the trackless waste of the great Atlantic Ocean.

And for this Orphaned World the holy Spirit made the like charitable provision.—Where the future fortunes of the Church, from its

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humble

humble Cradle to its inthronization in glory, are foretold to St. John, in a regular series of Prophetic visions, enigmatically represented, the Apostle sees *a mighty angel descend from Heaven; a rainbow surrounding his head; his face like the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire* \*. In this so graphical a description of the Son of God, clothed in all the pomp and majesty of his Father, the *attitude* is most observable; *His RIGHT FOOT WAS ON THE SEA, and his left on the Earth* †: An attitude expressive of his ready Providence addressed, in the fullness of time, to unveil this NEW WORLD so long concealed in the bosom of the Deep; and pointing out to his Church the religious use that was to be made of this discovery. For the angel having *sworn* (which denotes the revelation to be a matter of high importance) and intimated (by the words, *there shall be time no longer*) that the consideration of time is not to be taken in ‡, the Subject being of a distant period; he addresses himself to St. John, who here represents the *Church*, in the words of my text—*Thou must prophesy AGAIN before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and Kings.*—As much as to say, “The Church hath been faithful to her great Trust, in all things which have been hitherto in her power to discharge. But a time will come, when this mighty labour, so successfully undergone, in the conversion of the *Old World*, is to be repeated in the *New*. For the Church must PROPHECY AGAIN, or preach the Gospel for the *second time* to many new-discovered People and Nations.” *To prophesy*, signifying here what it does in many other Places of the New Testament, to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel.

Hence it appears, that to preach the Gospel to the *new World* when discovered, is not a mere act of simple Charity, but a work of indispensable duty.

The providential Discovery was at length made; and though, in itself, replete with all the seeds of temporal and spiritual Blessings, yet was it the immediate occasion of the most infernal mischiefs.

\* Rev. chap. x. ver. 1.

† Ver. 2.

‡ *ἔτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*, v. 6.

For as in the *old* World the Devil stept in to intercept the first fruits of Creation due to the all-bounteous Author, so was it, in the *new*: While, under the mask of Religion, if ever Popery might be said to wear that mask, the Evil One excited his Agents to desolate this late-discovered Continent, by the butchery and sacrifice of millions; and all, for having more gold than they knew how to use, and more Land than they knew how to cultivate. But while these *Dogs of Hell were crying havoc*, and the Inhabitants of the *new* World on the brink of extirpation, God raised up his chosen Instruments in the *old* to restore Christianity to its health and purity, then labouring in its last pangs under popish tyranny and superstition. For the Gospel, long sequestered and shut up, was of necessity to be known again before it could be *preached* AGAIN. The REFORMATION OF RELIGION once more opened this living Source. And then it was that the Sense of my Text became apparent; and that the Church first addressed itself to this undertaking.

Nor was this the only benefit. The Church of Rome itself, in order to support its shaken usurpation, was obliged in this, as in other palliations of its abuses, to vie with us in the discharge of this *second Mission*, in which our venerable Corporation has borne so large a Share.

I am but little acquainted with the history of its pious Establishment; but I reasonably suppose it to have been founded in obedience to this SECOND CALL: and, consequently, that the peculiar objects of its exalted Charity were the barbarous Americans, so long kept hid *in the Shadow of Death*.

I. Our Colonies, indeed, opened the Door to this spiritual Enterprize; and were, in reason, to be paid for their pains with some portion of the heavenly Manna; not so much for relief of their own wants, as for the wants of their Posterity. Our Colonies were formed and first peopled by religious and conscientious men; who, made uneasy at home by their intolerant Brethren, left the *Old World*, to enjoy, in peace, that first and chief prerogative of Man,

*the free worship of God according to his own Conscience* : At one time PURITANS driven over by the Episcopal Church ; at another, CHURCHMEN forced thither by the Presbyterian Faction ; just as the revolutions of State threw the civil power into one or the other hand. For it must be remembered (though to the opprobrium of humanity) that, of all the errors of that Antichristian Church from which the GOSPELLERS were, with derision, expelled, this most abominable of all, PERSECUTION FOR OPINIONS, stuck the deepest ; and after having tarnished the splendor of almost every Protestant Community in its turn, was the latest, and with most difficulty, shaken off.

Now, amongst the general *Wants* of new Colonies, composed of such kind of Men, RELIGION is rarely one. Of this our Colonists carried over an ample Cargo ; sufficient for themselves and their Posterity : and might therefore have been safely left to live upon their own Stock.

So that had this been all, our important Mission had not stopped at the Door, but only taken advantage of its opening, to address ourselves directly to the *Gentiles*.

But though the zeal of the first Colonists (rekindled by this violent remove to the other Hemisphere) kept Religion alive and active, yet their Poverty disabled them from supplying fuel to the vital flame ; I mean, provision for A PREACHING MINISTRY. Inasmuch, that, without the kindly assistance of their Mother-Country, this new Christian-Commonwealth had been, as the Roman historian expresses it of the imperial City in its Cradle, *Res unius Ætatis*. Against this danger, a timely aid was to be provided. And the Founders of our Society not being *Fanatics*, would not intrust the care to *Fanatics* : a People always ready, yet never fitted for one of these spiritual Enterprizes, indeed, so forward as to go out upon a *second call*, naked and penniless like those holy men, who, with the large viaticum of Miracles, went out upon the *first*. It was thought fit therefore to assign a decent maintenance for these late labourers in the Lord's Vineyard ; who, having *stood all the*  
*day*

*day idle*, were called, at the *last hour*, to their work. To this the Charter of Incorporation alludes; where, speaking of the purpose of the Society to appoint Missionaries to the Colonies, it adds—*which, by reason of their poverty, are destitute and unprovided of a MAINTENANCE for Ministers, and the public worship of God.*

This purpose hath been hitherto soberly pursued: our Missionaries to America having carefully avoided the Conduct of those of Rome, into the Levant; whose principal design hath hitherto been to reduce the distressed Churches of Greece and Asia to a submission to the Papal-Tyranny.

Notwithstanding this sage and decent conduct, certain of the Colonies, where the Established Church is *Presbyterian*, and still in its antient spirit of PURITY, have taken offence at our Mission exercised in their quarters, though only for the service of the dispersed Members of the *Episcopal* Church, residing amongst them.

Such a behaviour in a People, where wealth and Civil Faction have, as usual, inflamed religious zeal, is enough to remind us of that crisis, when the Disciples of *Jesus* are directed to *shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them.*

Nor would such a Secession lead us from the proper business of the SOCIETY. For though a Mission to the Colonies was first in the execution, yet, as appears from what hath been said, it was only secondary in the original Scheme.

Here, then, we might well leave these contentious People to themselves, did not a miserable circumstance still call for our rejected Charity: I mean, the spreading GENTILISM in the Colonies themselves. Not a brutal ignorance of God, as amongst the savage Natives; but a blasphemous contempt of his holy Dispensations, amongst our *Philosophic Colonists*. The Origine of which folly was, however, no more than this—

The rich product of the Plantations soon supplied the Colonists with all the *conveniencies of life*. And men are no sooner at their ease, than they are ready addressed to pleasure. So that the second Venture of our Colonists was for the *luxuries of social life*: amongst which,

which, the Commodity called FREETHINKING was carefully con-  
signed to them, as that which would give a relish and seasoning to  
all the rest. For in this close union of Sense and Reason in our  
Nature, the Man is at unrest, till each part be properly accommo-  
dated. While the body is content with a temperate enjoyment of  
its appropriated Good, the mind finds its pleasure in the pursuit of  
Knowledge, and in the practice of Virtue. But when the body  
plunges into the luxury of Sense, the mind will extravagatate through  
all the regions of a viciated Imagination. And these corporeal and  
intellectual Vices supporting one another, the ravages they make of  
Humanity are not to be controlled.

Thus it came to pass, that the very People, whose Fathers were  
driven for Conscience-sake into *the waste and howling Wilderness*, is  
now as ready to laugh at that BIBLE, the most precious relick of their  
ruined Fortunes, as at their Ruffs and Collar-bands.

Against this outrageous Folly (the sure prognostic of a falling  
State) the dearest Charity requires us to oppose all our spiritual en-  
deavours, before we go on upon the great Duty to which we are  
summoned in my text.

II. This brings me to that point, which I next proposed to  
consider, *Our Mission to the Gentiles*. And here, in entering on the  
subject, it may not be unuseful to observe the advantages which  
Popery hath over the Reformed, in training up their Labourers to  
this Harvest. For we should be unjust to ROME not to acknow-  
ledge its zeal to be equal to that of other Churches, in displaying  
the Christian Banner throughout the habitable world.

To see their advantages in a true light, we should consider what  
are the proper qualifications of one of these *Soldiers of Christ*—What  
he is disposed to do, and what he is ready to suffer, in this reli-  
gious warfare, amongst Heathens, whether civilized or barbarous—  
He must have an ardent zeal and unwearied diligence; Appetites  
subdued to all the distresses of want, and a Mind superior to all the  
terrors of mortality.

Now,

Now, these qualities and habits, their several *Orders of Religions* (from whence their Missionaries are taken) very early labour to inculcate. One quality is more deeply implanted by *this* Order, another by *that*; and the most necessary and essential are formed in *all*: thus all the monastic Institutions kindle and keep alive that exalted charity which ends in a Self-sacrifice for the salvation of our Brother.

The JESUITES subdue the Will by the severe discipline of blind obedience: to stand wherever they are placed, and to run wherever they are called. The CARTHUSIANS subdue the Appetites by a tedious course of bodily labours and mortifying abstinences: and the Order called THE CONGREGATION OF ST. PAUL, subdues the whole man: For, in a sense as peculiar to them as to their holy Patron, they *die daily*; the observance of their whole rule consisting in one continued meditation on the King of Terrors.

Nor is this all. The several *Orders*, like Workmen who travel separately on the various parts of the same Machine, each of them to be disposed by the Master-Artist, in its proper place and to its destined use; the *Orders*, I say, send their Subjects, thus prepared, to the *College DE PROPAGANDA FIDE*, to receive their last finishing, by instruction in the Languages, the Manners and the Customs of the barbarous Nations, to whose conversion they are appointed and addressed. And, indeed, without so long and regular a preparation, it is not in Nature, whatever Grace may effect, for any man cheerfully, and, at the same time, soberly to undergo all the accumulated distresses, ever ready to overtake a faithful Missionary.

For want of these advantages, a Protestant Society, like ours, hath been too frequently obliged to take up with subjects from amongst men of ruined fortunes; such, whose impotency of mind have shewn them unable to bear either Poverty or Riches. Or else from amongst heated Zealots, totally unqualified for every sober and important work.

And, indeed, when we consider the greatness of our wants in this kind, we should be tempted to wish for a COLLEGE, destined for

for the supplial of a sufficient number of able Missionaries in constant succession, brought up, from their early youth, in such a discipline as may be judged best fitted for such a service. And here it may not be impertinent to observe, that should the Governors of that famous UNIVERSITY, to which a munificent Benefactor hath bequeathed a large estate for the erection of a NEW COLLEGE, be at a loss to execute his intention in such a manner as may give new vigour to the decayed Spirit of Learning and Religion, they may find, in a COLLEGE DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, an establishment which would interfere with no other, and would give additional sanctity to all the rest.

Having premised thus much, I come more directly to *Our Mission to the Gentiles*; considered in obedience to the Command, to *Prophecy AGAIN before many peoples and nations*; that is to say, Barbarians bond and free. These latter, the Aborigines of the Country, Savages without Law or Religion, are the principal Objects of our Charity. Their temporal, as well as spiritual, condition, calls loudly for our assistance; and more especially as *civilizing*, will be found a necessary step to *conversion*.

The benevolent Spirit of Antiquity, which set their Heroes and Law-givers on reforming the savage manners of their barbarous Neighbours, and communicating to them the blessings of CIVIL-LIFE, as divine as it appears, hath been yet outdone in the Charity of these later times, which sends Missionaries amongst the wild inhabitants of the new World, with the greater blessing of the Gospel. But the constant ill success of this glorious Undertaking, hath been a long time matter of grief to all good men. Something therefore must needs be much amiss, to defeat a purpose which Grace and Nature conspire to advance. And, if we search carefully into it, we shall find it to be this, *the preaching of it to savage and brutal Men*. For the GOSPEL, plain and simple as it is, and fitted in its nature for what it was ordained to effect, requires an intellect something above that of a Savage to apprehend. Nor is it at all to the dishonour of our holy Faith, that such a one must be taught a  
previous

previous Lesson; and first of all instructed in the *emollient arts of life*. And it is not one of the least benefits of SOCIETY that, at the time it teaches us to improve every bodily accommodation, it enlarges and enlightens the understanding by the activity which the mind exercises in improving those accommodations.

For want of this previous culture, it hath happened, that when, by the unwearied labour of the Missionary, numbers of these Savages have been baptized into the Faith, such Converts have never long preserved, nor were they able to propagate among their Tribes, the *Christianity* they had been taught; but successive Missions have found, the work was ever to begin anew.

From whence we conclude, that they set out at the wrong end; for, to make the Gospel *understood*, much more to propagate and establish it, these Barbarians should have been first taught the *civil arts of life*. And, indeed, to civilize a barbarous People is, in itself, a work of such exalted charity, that to find it neglected, when a further and far nobler end than the *arts of life* may be procured by it, is matter of infinite astonishment.

We justly censure the Popish Missionaries for their ill-directed zeal in propagating a *Commentitious Gospel*, for pure and genuine Christianity. But then we must be so fair to confess that, in the preparatory part of their Mission, their conduct and address have been so humane and rational, as to be well worthy of our imitation. Nor need this give scandal to any good Protestant. Our great Master himself hath recommended to the *Children of light* the Example of the *Children of this World*, because, says he, *these are wiser in their generation*; that is, they are more skilful than the *Children of light*, in ADAPTING MEANS TO ENDS.

This learned Audience easily understands that, by the *Children of this World*, I mean the JESUITES: they are emphatically so. Now these men have, both in South and North America, successfully practised the method I here presume to recommend: which is, first of all, to CIVILIZE the subjects of our Mission. The steps they took to effect this great purpose were no less judicious than the pro-

ject itself was noble and benevolent. They began with teaching the Savages the Art of AGRICULTURE; of all the civil arts, the most essential, as it soonest reduces men from a roving wandering life into settled habitations, the first great bond of the Social State. The Provinces of *Paraguay* and the Island of *California* do, for this blessing, proclaim them the Benefactors of Mankind. And had they but taught the ETERNAL GOSPEL in its *purity*, at the time they taught the transitory arts of life in their *integrity*, they would have deserved all the praise, and much of the Power they aspired to.

But in all this affair, the awful Justice of Providence on the Instruments is no less conspicuous than his Blessing on the Work; which, when considered together, will afford an useful warning to Mankind.

This SOCIETY OF JESUS, as is too well known, had, from their very first establishment, in direct opposition to the professed end of their institution, and in defiance of the sacred name they had assumed, immersed themselves in the worst part of civil intrigues; which they carried on in so flagitious a manner, that there is hardly a Court in Christendom (into most of which they had insinuated themselves) where they have not left manifest traces of their Anti-Christian Politics, in seditions and assassinations, sanctified and supported on the two main pillars of their system, *relaxed Morals* and *Papal Omnipotency*.

At length, after having rioted in these disorders for a century and an half, they conceived, either out of humanity or avarice, the noble project of civilizing the inland Inhabitants of South America; whom the Spaniards and Portuguese, on the East and West, had, by their diabolic treatment, rendered so outrageous against their Persecutors, that the fiercest beasts of prey were a more desirable neighbourhood.

In this condition the Missionary Jesuites found these persecuted Indians: and, for the ease and safety (as they pretended) of the Christian Colonies on each side, they sat upon the desperate project  
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of taming them to humanity : which at length indeed they effected ; though with infinite labour and prodigious slaughter of the brethren of the Order.

However, the attempt succeeded : and the Jesuites, out of these wild and rabid tribes, founded so equal and powerful a Republic, as by their virtues to disgrace the neighbouring Colonies, and by their Policy to give umbrage to the two Catholic Monarchs, to whom those Colonies belong.

For the FATHERS, now Fathers indeed, and worthy of their name, *the Fathers of a People*, seeing the morals of the surrounding Colonies incurably corrupt, could find no other effectual means of securing the infant virtue of their new establishments from the contagion of Spanish and Portuguese manners, than by a total exclusion of all commerce and communication between them.

This served for a pretence to the two monarchs (whose sovereignty over Paraguay the Fathers acknowledged) to take to themselves the fruits of that Sovereignty, now become a morsel delicious enough to excite a regal appetite.

They therefore entered into a kind of Partition-Treaty to share Paraguay between them ; a Treaty which is likely to end in the ruin of this long envied and detested Order : Indignant Providence seeming to have decreed, as a lesson to mankind, that while, for the sake of Humanity, this glorious work should be preserved, that yet for the sake of divine Justice, these unworthy instruments, who with impunity had so long wantoned in civil mischief, and confounded and insulted all things sacred and prophane, should at length fall by their first virtuous project.

But we, who have God and the Monarch on our side, have nothing of this to fear. On the contrary, we have every thing to encourage us in this arduous task ; which is now rendered more promising and easy, by the large dominions lately acceded to the British empire in America. Our entrance into the heart of these barbarous Nations being now no longer interrupted and traversed

by the frauds, the false insinuations, and the malicious Tales of our European Rivals.

The *spiritual* benefits arising from the labour of *civilizing* are many and substantial. At present, the Savages (who have sense enough to see that the Europeans keep many things from them of high importance to their welfare) observing in us, while busied only in our Gospel Mission, a total disregard to their temporal interests, are difficultly brought to think, that the spiritual matters, pressed upon them, are of much importance either to themselves or their Teachers. But when they have been first of all so sensibly obliged by us as to be redeemed from the miseries of a brutal life, and set at ease by the security, and made happy by the accommodations of Society, they will naturally give a grateful and serious attention to their Benefactors, instructing them in sublimer truths, and directing them to still more substantial happiness. In a word, From merciless enemies, ever addressed to ravage and desolate the borders of our Colonies, we shall make them our cordial Friends, ready to embrace peace; a peace, not forced upon them by the terror of our arms, or feigned by them through the allurements of treacherous Presents, but immoveably established by gratitude and love, and further supported by the mutual advantages of HONEST COMMERCE.

But, alas ! we are yet far from this glorious Term of our labours. The hindrances have been many—Partly from the *qualities* of the Missionaries, and in part from the ravenous *pursuits* of our Colonists.

Of the Missionaries, some have been over-heated with that Fanaticism which disposes men to an utter contempt of *worldly things*: so that, instead of teaching the Savages the benefits of social life, and recommending civil manners to their roving Tribes, they are much rather inclined to throw aside their own, and accommodate themselves with the dried skins and parched Corn of the Natives. Others of a cooler turn and lower form of Superstition, took it into their heads, that the Vices of improved life (as they may be  
now

now gathered in their full bloom amongst the Colonists) would more indispose the Americans to the precepts of the Gospel, than their present state of brutality incapacitate them from apprehending the doctrines of it : and therefore, on the whole, thought it best to keep their Converts shut out from the advantages of so dangerous a Society.

But, without question, the obstinate perseverance in this fatal measure is chiefly owing to the false and inhumane policy of the Colonists. A policy common to them all, which makes them despise and set at nought even the horrors of a *Savage War*, for the sake of an unequal Traffic between the improved and unimproved gifts of all-bounteous Nature.

From the *Free*, I come now (the last point I propose to consider) to the Barbarians *in bonds*.

By these I mean the vast multitudes stolen yearly from the opposite Continent, and sacrificed by the Colonists to their great Idol, the GOD OF GAIN. “ But what then? (say these zealous Worshipers of Mammon) it is our own *Property* we offer up.” What! Property in your Brethren, as in herds of Cattle? your Brethren both by Nature and Grace, Creatures endowed with all our Faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour? Does not this equally shock the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense? But, alas! what is there in the infinite abuses of Society which does not shock them!

In excuse of this violation of all things civil and sacred (for *Nature* created Man free, and *Grace* invites him to assert his freedom), it hath been pretended, That “ though, indeed, these miserable Outcasts of the Race of Adam be torn from their homes and native Wilds by force and fraud, yet this violation of the rights of humanity improves their condition and renders them less unhappy.” But who are You, who pretend to judge of another man’s *happiness*? that State, which each man, under the instinctive guidance of his Creator, forms for himself; and not one Man for another? To know what constitutes *mine* or *your* Happiness, is the sole prerogative

rogative of Him who made us, and cast us in so various and different Moulds. Did these your Slaves ever complain to you of their *unhappiness* amidst their native woods and desarts? or, rather, let me ask, did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you, their Lordly Masters? where they see, indeed, the accommodations of Civil life; but, the more to imbitter their miseries, see them all pass by to others, themselves unbenefited by them. Be so gracious then, ye petty Tyrants over human freedom, to let your Slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes *their own happiness*. And then see whether they do not rather place it in the *Return* to their own Country, than in the contemplation of your Grandeur, of which, their distresses make so large a part. A *Return* so passionately longed for, that, despairing of *happiness* amidst the Chains of their cruel taskmasters, they console themselves in the fancy that their *future state* will be a return to their own country; where the equal Lord of all things will recompense their sufferings here. And I do not find, their haughty Masters have yet concerned themselves to invade this last refuge of the miserable. The less hardy of them indeed wait for this consolation till overwearied Nature sets them free; but more resolved tempers have recourse even to self-violence, to force a speedier passage.

But it may be still urged, “that although what is called *human happiness* be of so fantastic a nature, that each man creates it for himself, yet *human misery* is more substantial and uniform throughout all the tribes of Men. Now, from the worst of real miseries, the savage Africans (say their more savage Masters) are entirely secured by these forced emigrations; such as the being perpetually hunted down, like beasts of prey or profit, by their more fierce and powerful Neighbours.”—In truth, a blessed change! from the being hunted to the being caught. But who are they that have set on foot this general HUNTING? Are they not these very civilized violators of humanity, themselves? who tempt the weak appetites, and provoke the wild passions of the fiercer Savages to prey upon the rest. However, in favour of an *established enormity*, it is fit that  
all

all that can be urged should be enforced. Something, I own, indeed not much, may be said in favour of this traffic. The **TRADING IN MEN** was the staple Commodity of the most early times : for, as the Poet observes,

Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,  
A mighty Hunter, and his prey was **MAN**.

But, to bring this nice consideration home to ourselves. We of this Corporation, by the ceaseless change of Property, are become the innocent partakers of the fruits of so iniquitous a traffic ; a very worthy benefactor having bequeathed unto us in trust, for the Propagation of the Gospel, **A PLANTATION STOCKED WITH SLAVES**. An odd Legacy to the promulgators of the *Law of Liberty* ! But intended, perhaps, as a kind of compensation for these violations of it. And, if so, I am certain it will fully answer the pious intention of the Donor. God, out of this *Evil* (according to the gracious way of his Providence) having made us the honoured Instruments of producing *Good*.

The *cruelty* of certain **PLANTERS**, with respect to the temporal accommodations of these poor wretches, and the *irreligious negligence* of others with regard to their spiritual, is become a general Scandal.

Now this singular Donation will enable us to redress both the inhumanity and impiety of this conduct within the limits of our own Property. But this is the least part of the advantages we shall reap from it. What is of infinite more importance is the **EXAMPLE** we shall be enabled to hold out to the Colonies at large ; an Example to invite or shame all tyrannous Masters into a more compassionate treatment of their fellow-creatures by Nature and their Brethren by Grace.

It would be impiety to suspect that the Society will not persevere in making this use of so fortunate a circumstance ; since their duty more particularly exacts it, and their means of all kinds enable them to do it with effect.

To

## 336 SERMONS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

To conclude, From what hath been said may be seen how faithfully this incorporated Society have laboured to discharge their Trust.

I have ventured to hint at what appears to me the *best means* of perfecting the Work, by setting before you (though far unable to do it to advantage) the new encouragements we have to *Prophecy AGAIN before many Peoples, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings.*

POST.

## P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE the printing this, a pamphlet has been published, intituled, *A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School in Connetcticut, New-England*; in which is a *Letter from the Indians of Onoboque* to the Directors of this Charity; curious enough, on many accounts to be here transcribed.

*Lake Uisage, July 31, 1765.*

BRETHREN,

WE were informed by our Messenger that we sent to you last Spring (*Gwedelbes*, or *Peter Agwirondongwas*), that you would not only assist us by sending us Ministers to teach us Christianity, but also that you would assist us in setting up Husbandry, by sending a Number of white People to live with us; who, when come, should build us Mills, teach us Husbandry, and furnish us with Tools for Husbandry, &c.

We greatly rejoiced at hearing of it, and expected them this Spring, but are disappointed; at which we are very sorry: But we hope that we may yet receive them, and should much rejoice in it, should you send them to us.

We would have you understand, Brethren, that we have no Thoughts of selling our Land to any that come to live among us. For if we should sell a little Land to any, by and by they would want to buy a little more, and so our Land would go by Inches, till we should have none to live upon.—Yet as those that come to instruct us must live, we have no Objections against their improving as much Land as they please; yet the Land shall remain ours.

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We

We have, Brethren, never petitioned to you yet for any to assist us, but only those that come with God's *News* (*i. e.* the Gospel); yet, as you have offered to assist us likewise in teaching us Husbandry, we greatly rejoice in it, AND THINK THAT THEY SHOULD GO TOGETHER, the one as well as the other, and that we want Instruction in both. Brethren, we send our kindest Love to you, and remain your Brethren,

*Isaac Dakayenense*  
*Adam Woonwanorun.*

# S E R M O N IV.

ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.



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## S E R M O N IV.

ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

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PROV. XXVI. ver. 4, 5.

ANSWER NOT A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST THOU ALSO BE LIKE UNTO HIM. ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

**T**HE *contempt* of Religion soon followed the *abuse* of it: and the abuse of this sacred Institution is almost coeval with the thing itself: for that corruption of heart, whose disorder Religion was ordained to cure, hath been ever struggling against its remedy.

I. In the days of Solomon, when *Wisdom* was at its height, *Folly*, as we learn from many passages of that regal Sage, kept equal paces with it. Hence it was, that, after exhibiting many lively paintings of the irreligious Scorners, he subjoined directions to the generous Advocate of Piety and Virtue, how best to repress their insolence and vanity. ANSWER NOT a Fool (says he) accord-  
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*ing to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. ANSWER a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

Short isolated sentences were the mode in which ancient Wisdom delighted to convey its precepts, for the regulation of life and manners. But when this natural mode of instruction had lost the grace of novelty, and a studied refinement had new coloured the candid simplicity of ancient converse, these instructive Sages found it necessary to give their moral maxims, the seasoning and poignancy of *Paradoxes*. In these lively and not useless sports of fancy, the Son of David, we are told, greatly excelled. We find them to abound in the writings which bear his name: and we meet with frequent allusions to them, in all the parts of Sacred Writ, under the names of *Riddles*, *Parables*, and *Dark-sayings*.

Now of all the examples of this species of instruction there is none fuller of moral wisdom than this *Paradox* of my Text, or which in the happiness of the expression hath so artfully conveyed the Key for opening the treasures of it. But as a *dark* conceit and a *dull* one have a great proximity in modern Wit; and a nice *difference* is not distinguished from a *contradiction* in modern reasoning; this *Paradox* of the Sage hath been mistaken by his Critics, for an *absurdity* of some of his Transcribers, who forgot the negative in the latter member of the sentence; and so is to be set right: and at an easier expence, than unfolding *dark sentences of old*, namely, exchanging them for clearer, of a modern texture; which TIME may make *ancient readings*; and which a careful collation of its blunders may hereafter make the *true* \*.

II. But.

\* So again, Prov. xviii. 22. *Who so findeth a Wife (says the Wise-man) findeth a good thing; and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* But so bold an assertion hath revolted the more experienced Critics. They *presume* that Solomon expressed himself according to those venerable MSS. which read—*Who so findeth A GOOD WIFE findeth A GOOD THING; and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* And this out of regard to the truth of things. But Solomon sure was never sent into the world to make this discovery. It was a fitter exploit for the old *Hermit of Prague*, the Poet speaks of, who although he *never saw*

pen

II. But they who choose to receive Scripture in its antique Garb, will perhaps venture with me, to try whether the seeming contradiction in the common text cannot be fairly unriddled without any other aid than of the words themselves in which the *dark saying* is conveyed.

Had the *Folly* of these Fools been only of one condition or denomination, the advice *to answer*, and *not to answer*, had indeed been repugnant to itself; but as the *folly*, by the Wise Man's own account of it, is seen to have been of different kinds, in some of which, *to answer* might offend the dignity of Truth; and, in others, *not to answer* might hurt its interests; *To answer*, and *not to answer*, is a consistent, and may, for aught these Critics know, be a very wise direction.

Had the advice been given simply and without circumstance, *to answer the Fool, and not to answer him*, a Critic who held the Sacred Text in reverence, would satisfy himself in supposing, that the different directions referred, to the doing a thing in and out of season. But when, to the general advice about *answering*, this circumstance is added, *according to his folly*, that interpretation is excluded; and

*pen and ink*, yet by mere dint of penetration discovered, that *whatever is, is*. And had these Critics reflected (which would have required but little more reach of thought) that the Wise-man was here only characterising the *divine Ordinance of Marriage* itself, as instituted by God in Paradise, on this great Principle—that it was *not good for man to be alone*, their doubts concerning the integrity of the text had been easily relieved: Solomon's assertion being simply this, "That whoever endeavours to conform himself to the order of Providence, in supporting this Institution, endeavours to obtain *a good thing*." It is not the *Woman*, whether good or bad, that hath here this appellation: but the *Wife* figuratively, too, employed for the holy Institution of Marriage itself. And to this sense the concluding words might have led them—and *obtaineth favour of the Lord*. For why doth he who *findeth a wife*, obtain God's favour? Surely because he hath complied with, and promoted, the Ordinance of God. The *Fool* indeed may say, *according to his folly*, that "it is here insinuated, a *good wife* is such a rarity that a successful search after her must be ascribed to the special favour of God." But if he does say so, he deserves *no answer*, were it only for supposing that Solomon was here trifling in the modern vein of trivial satire.

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a difficulty indeed arises; a difficulty, which hath made those, who have no reverence for the text, accuse it of absurdity and contradiction.

But now, to each direction, reasons are subjoined, *why a Fool should, and why he should not, be answered*: reasons, which, when set together and compared, are, at first sight, sufficient to make the Critic suspect that all the contradiction lies in his own incumbered ideas.

1. The reason given *why a Fool should not be answered according to his folly*, is *lest he [the Answerer] be like unto him*.

2. The reason given *why the Fool should be answered according to his folly*, is *lest he [the Fool] be wise in his own conceit*.

The cause assigned of *not answering* therefore, forceably insinuates that the Defender of Religion should not imitate the Insulter of it in his modes of disputation; which may be comprized in *sophistry*, *buffoonry*, and *scurrility*. For what could so much assimilate the Answerer to his Idiot-Adversary as the putting on his Fool's coat, in order to captivate and confound the Rabble?

The cause assigned of *answering*, plainly intimates, that the Sage should address himself to confute the Fool upon the Fool's own *Principles*, by shewing, that they lead to conclusions very wide from the impieties he would deduce from them. And if any thing can prevent the *Fool* from being *wise in his own conceit*, it must be the dishonour and the ridicule of having his own *Principles* turned against him; while they are shewn to make for the very contrary purpose to that for which he had employed them.

The high Wisdom conveyed in the two precepts of this unravelled *Paradox* will be best understood by explaining the mischiefs avoided and the advantages arising from the observance of each of them.

III. We are *not to answer a fool according to his folly, lest we also be like unto him*—This is the reason given; and a good one it is; sufficient to make any sober man decline a contest, where even Victory would bring dishonour with it. Now if our *answer* be of such

such a nature that we also (though with contrary intentions) do injury to Truth, we become *like unto him* in the essential part of his Character. And surely Truth is never more insulted, nor its Advocates more debased, than when they employ the *foolish* arts of *Sophistry*, *Buffoonry*, and *Scurrility*, in its defence.

1. To use *fallacious* and inconclusive arguments in support of Truth, a trick that hath been too often practised, is doing it infinite discredit.

It tends to make men suspicious that the pretended Truth is falsehood, when it finds support in the common arts of Impostors. The most favourable, and perhaps fairest inference which will be made is, that the Truth is defended, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Defender. Hence we become less attentive to the issue, and more jealous of the good faith of the Reasoner. Hence our reverence for the Cause is lessened, and our prejudices against the Advocate increased. It tends to bring the two parties of *Wisdom* and *Folly* on a level, when they stand on the same unfaithful and fallacious ground. It tends to erase the distinction between *true* and *false*, and at length makes all terminate in that most inveterate species of *folly*, Pyrronic doubt and uncertainty.

2. To employ *Buffoonry* in this service is violating the Dignity of Truth, which can enforce its influence amongst men no longer than while the sanctity of its Character is kept safe from insult.

*Buffoonry* deprives Truth of the only thing she wants, in order to come off triumphant; I mean, a *fair bearing*. To examine, men must be serious: and to judge, they must be attentive to the argument. *Buffoonry* gives a levity to the mind, which makes it seek entertainment, where it should find only instruction. But let this poor bastard-talent be taken at its utmost value, the practice of it will still raise a suspicion that the Advocate of Religion hath his Cause little at heart while, in the very heat of this important Controversy, he can allow himself to be amused and diverted by *buffoonry*, this spurious Counterfeit of Wit; since in matters which

are understood to concern us most, we are wont to appear, as well as to be, most in earnest: And this scandal given by the Advocate will always bring prejudice on the Cause.

3. Again, PERSONAL ABUSE, that favorite *colour* which strikes most in the Fool's, as well as in the Knave's, Rhetoric, is carefully to be avoided. For nothing can make the *Answerer* so much resemble the *Fool* he is confuting, as a want of Candor and Charity; which this mode of *answering* so openly betrays. Whatever pretence the *Fool* makes to Candor—to Charity he makes none. His very attempt is an avowed violation of it. He would deprive the World of what he himself confesses to be most useful to Society; and most pleasing to the natural sentiments of man; I mean *Religion*. He would break down this Barrier against Vice; and rob us of this best consolation against the evils of human life. And in such a service he follows but his nature and his office, when he vilifies and calumniates all who set themselves to oppose his impious attempts.

One might wonder that the Wise-man, who gives this caution to the *Friends* of Religion, could suppose that they should stand in need of it. But he well knew of what stuff we are all made;—that the irregular passions frequently operate alike, whether in pursuit of truth or falsehood; and that the arms fabricated and naturally employed in defence of error, are unnaturally taken up, to skirmish in a better cause.

For as all men strive to be on the laughing side, so all affect Wit to support themselves in it. Now *Wit* being the portion but of one in a million, every pretender to Wit mistakes *Buffoonry* for it, or hopes at least that his Reader will mistake it.

A well-urged argument is, perhaps, as rare an effort as a well-turned piece of wit, and makes an Adversary, against whom it is pointed, as much out of humour. So that such a one will be apt to supply his want of sense with his abundance of *scurrility*; which is the same succedaneum to good Argument that *Buffoonry* is to true Wit;

Wit; and will serve the user, who appeals to the taste of a prejudiced Cabal, full as well.

These are the various modes of *answering* which are to be avoided, lest the Advocate of Religion become *like* the vain Caviller, whom he addresses himself to confute.

But, under the reason here given for *not answering*, there is another insinuated—We are not to answer the Fool, lest we should be like to him in *Character*. This is the reason given. The reason insinuated is—lest we should be like to him in *the issue of his Inquiries*. What that is, Solomon tells us in this same Book of Proverbs—**THE SCORNER SEEKETH WISDOM AND FINDETH IT NOT \***. For *Scorner* is the name here given to the *Fool*, with reference to his arts of controversy, carried on by sophistry, buffoonry, and scurrility, anatomized above; all of them the marks of *scorn* and insolence. Now if this be true, that the *Scorner's search after wisdom* is vain and fruitless, we have here another reason why we should not imitate his practice; or, in other words, why we should *not answer the Fool according to his folly*.

That no other issue of his *search* is to be expected, I shall now shew you.

The *Fool*, turned *Scorner*, places the perfection of Wisdom rather in laughing at what is wrong than in pursuing what is right: and, of all the *seekers* after Truth, is, both by his disposition and his method of inquiry, least likely to find it.

1. **PRIDE** and **VANITY** are the foundation of the *Scorner's* Character; they consist in a presumptuous conceit of superior knowledge; *Pride* disposes him to receive homage from himself; *Vanity*, to demand it from others. But, of all the Passions, these most effectually keep hid from us that imbecillity and incurable ignorance of our Nature, which, in our search after truth, ought always to be present to us, both to excite our industry, and to awaken our caution. For without industry we can make but small advances;

\* Chap. xiv. 6.

and without caution we shall be perpetually deviating from the right track.

As the *Scorner's* opinion of his own abilities is so ill founded, his *Vanity* will always be seeking homage from others, for those excellencies which his *Pride* has created in himself: to gratify which, is the only thing he aims at in the display of his self-imputed wit. And though *true wit* and *true wisdom* were meant for each other's aid, yet this spurious *Conceit*, which the *Scorner* so much cultivates and indulges, serving only to raise ill-timed mirth, or to gratify the malignity of his depraved temper, drives *Wisdom* from so polluted a quarter.

This species of *Vanity* brings on a levity of mind; which, in its first stages, corrupts the Judgment in our estimate of the importance of Truth: and, as it grows habitual, occasions a total indifference to its interests. Indeed, nothing so enervates and effeminates the Reason as the immoderate indulgence of *Ridicule*; for as the Wise-man observes, in another place of this book—*the end of this mirth is heaviness*: that is, it sets in DULNESS.

Now, this indifference to Truth and Falshood shews itself, first of all, in a malignant pleasure the *Scorner* takes in embarrassing and perplexing every subject he pretends to handle and examine. Nor is this the worst. His indifference concludes, at length, in a total *Scepticism*. For when once a man can bring himself to be indifferent to Objects so important as those of good and evil, the labour required in discriminating their natures will so offend his easy delicacy, that he will gladly take refuge in a sett of Principles which shorten his search, and persuade him that the inquiry is in vain; that truth and falshood are Chimeras; or that if they have a real existence, yet, the light in which they are objected to our contemplation is so obscure, and the human Intellect so dull by Nature and so narrowed by Institution, that we perpetually mistake them for one another, in the indistinct and cloudy light in which they are presented to us.

2. The *Scorner's* method of inquiry is another cause of his *never finding Wisdom*. He begins with detecting and exposing Error. And, indeed, Inquirers of more sobriety often find it necessary to do the same; because these errors often lie in their way; obstruct their search, and retard their progress. But then, this *method* leading the Detector into a large field for the display of his pleasantry; and for the exercise of his wit, if he has any; the *Scorner* grows so enamoured of *Buffoonry*, that here he stays, and spends all his time in this trifling amusement, when his business was only to stop till he had cleared the road, that he might proceed with fresh vigour in his search. So that this, which, at best, is but the first step to Wisdom, the *Scorner* makes the last.

But it is not only the pleasure he takes in laughing at folly and error, but his aversion for those regions of severe Truth where *Wisdom* resides, which keeps him so self-satisfied in these jovial vanities.

Besides, were he never so much disposed to push on his search to the very Throne of *Wisdom*, his Talents, and the habitual use to which he puts them, would render his inquiry fruitless and ineffectual. To see and to expose the ABUSE OF THINGS, by which scorn is ingendered, requires little more than a quick sense of what is wrong, and a lively imagination to expose it: but, to penetrate to their REAL NATURE, demands strength and application of mind, rarely found, where the exercise of a lively fancy hath been long indulged. True *Wisdom* consisting in the knowledge of the *use* of things, just as idle wit subsists in laughing at their *abuses*.

Thus we see, why the *Scorner* affects to *seek Wisdom*; and how it happens that he never finds it.

All which considered, the wise man advises us, *not to answer a fool according to his folly, lest we also be like unto him.*

IV. But then, *lest the Fool should be wise in his own conceit*, we are, at the same time, bid to give him an Answer. Now, how this can be done in the manner here directed, namely, *according to his folly,*

*folly*, and yet, the *Answerer* not become *like unto him*, but, on the contrary, able thereby, to produce the effect here intimated (viz. the cure of the *Fool's* vain *conceit* of his superior Wisdom), is a difficulty indeed; a difficulty worthy the Advocate of Truth to undertake.

And, a Master of his Subject may hope to overcome this difficulty by contriving to confute the *Fool* on his own *Principles*, by shewing that they lead to a Conclusion very destructive of those free consequences he has laboured to deduce from them.

To give an instance or two. A capital objection to what we call REVELATION, is the innumerable pretensions to it by Impostors in all ages: Every Founder of the National Religion assuming a divine Mission, supported by Prodigies and Wonders. Yet this favorite *Principle* of Infidelity may be fairly turned upon the Objectors themselves.

1. For first, the abundance of these pretended Revelations strongly evinces the need which men were conscious they had of the extraordinary direction of Heaven, to aid the feeble glimmering of natural light, and to support those capital and general Truths which are so obscurely and imperfectly discovered by it. For the craft of one of these Impostors is always directed to take advantage of the common turn of the People. He is too well acquainted with human nature to think of giving it a new bias. His skill consists in applying what he finds most prevailing in it, to the aid of his Politics.

2. Secondly, True Revelation is essentially distinguished from all the Specieses of the false, by this circumstance, that the false have all of them *subordinate Deities* for the object of their Worship; and consequently all have the complaisance to acknowledge the truth of one another's pretensions. Whereas true Revelation claiming its origin from the first Cause of all things, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, condemns, by necessary consequence, all the national Religions of Paganism, as Impostures.

2. Another instance—and then enough will be said to explain my meaning on this head. The Christian Dispensation is accused of falsehood for its abounding in MYSTERIES. These *Fools* suppose, that “if God hath indeed revealed himself to Mankind, every thing contained in his Dispensation must be plain and evident.”—But, in this judgment, they seem only to provide for their own infirmities, without any regard to the honour of their Maker. They forget that, though the Receivers be Men, yet the Giver is the Lord. And that, therefore, though the fundamental Doctrines of such a Dispensation should be adapted to the weakness and narrowness of the human Capacity, yet the Creator and Governor of all things should mark the Religion *for his own*, by such sublime traits, which, at the time that they express the shining features of the Divinity, humble the vain arrogance of human Reason; the perfect comprehension of these transcendent Truths, not essential to the profession of our Faith here, being reserved for our reward, hereafter.

Nor is this *Principle* or Objection of Solomon’s Fool less subject to retorsion than the other.

To the pretended Friend of Natural Religion, the Believing *Answerer* would say, “You fly with affright from Revelation at the sight of its *Mysteries*, yet these *Mysteries* meet you again in Natural Religion, in which you have taken refuge. For *Free-will* reconciled to *Prescience* is as inexplicable a Mystery as any our holy Religion holds out to us, to exercise the submission of our Reason, and keep it in due subordination to Faith. And the force of it holds as strongly against you, as any Gospel Mystery against a Believer: since if you be, indeed, a friend or Follower of Natural Religion, you must confess, that man is *free*, since without freedom he could not be accountable; you must confess that God *foresees*, since without the prescience of the actions of free-agents he could not be omniscient.

As

As for the *Fool* who hides his Atheistic Naturalism under the cover of Natural Religion, the Believer easily retorts his objection to Mysteries, from the State of the Material World, where only, the *Fool* seeks, and expects to find, real Knowledge. Yet he must confess all that concerns MATTER to be an explicable Mystery. I pass its creation out of nothing; because I am in doubt whether the *Naturalist* holds or rejects this Truth, and will only urge him with its divisibility, its expansion and contraction, its inert force, and all those incomprehensible qualities which the Newtonian Philosophy hath revealed.

With the same force as in these two instances, may all the *Fool's* Principles be returned upon him. And sure if any thing can dissipate the vain vision of being *wise in his own conceit*, it must be the sense of such a dishonour. For what can be more humiliating than to have his own Principles shewn to be destructive of his Conclusions? What more mortifying than to have those Principles, in whose invention he so much gloried, or in whose use he so much confided, fairly turned, by the unerring rules of good Logic, to the credit of the Religion he was attempting to overthrow? Nor is the Partisan of Falsehood more humbled than the Cause of Truth is advanced by *thus* answering a Fool *according to his Folly*: For that victory, where our Opposite is made to contribute to his own overthrow, is always held, in common estimation, to be most complete: That System being reasonably judged despicable, whose most plausible support draws after it the ruin of what it was raised to uphold.

On the whole, It is thus (as the Wise-man directs) that this forward *Fool* is to be treated; whether it be by SILENCE or CONFUTATION.

V. That his *Folly* is to be repressed *according to the dictates of true Wisdom*, the nature of the thing sufficiently instructs us. There was no need of a particular direction to enforce the expediency and necessity of such a conduct.

But

But then, it sometimes happens that the interests of Truth may require that he should be *answered* even *according to his folly*: And, as in discharge of our duty *here* the execution is very liable to abuse, it was fit and proper to obviate the danger. This, we may observe, the Sacred Writer hath done; and with much art, and elegance of address.

It may indeed be said, “Why this practised obliquity in defence of Truth? Is not the purity of her nature rather defiled, than her real interests advanced, by this indirection? And doth not *Wisdom* seem to say, that it best suits her dignity to repress *Folly* by those Arms only which *Wisdom* herself hath fabricated and tempered: that Truth, by the information of her own light, points out the strait road to her abode; and forbids us to wriggle into her presence through blind by-paths, and the cloudy medium of falsehood?”

But they who talk thus magnificently, do not sufficiently reflect on the condition of our weak-sighted nature, which can ill bear the bright and unshaded light of Truth: Nor do they seem to see the beauty of that contrivance in the Order of things, whereby *Folly*, by thus administering to her own defeat, is made to bring us back again into the ways of *Wisdom*, from which she had seduced and misled us.

The REDEEMER of the World, in condescension to the infirmities of those whom he came to save, hath taken this very advantage which this established order of things afforded him. For, more effectually to silence those *Fools* who rose up against him, he answered them *according to their folly*; that is, he demonstrated to them the truth and reasonableness of the Gospel on their own ideas, of the nature and end of the LAW; ideas formed on Rabbinical Traditions, and the reveries of Greek Philosophers; and urged by them in discredit of his Mission and his Office. The pure and unabated splendor of Truth, ushered in, in all the solemn State of Wisdom, would have only increased their judicial blindness. To bear this effusion of light undazzled, they had need of the instant

aid of that SPIRIT OF TRUTH which was not yet come, but only promised to be sent.

Indeed, when this sacred Guide, who was to *lead men into all truth*, came down from above, and while he continued, in an extraordinary manner, to enlighten the Understandings of the Faithfull, there was no occasion for this inforced Ministry of *Folly* to contribute to her own overthrow: And therefore, the first Ministers of the Gospel proceeded to the Establishment of Truth in a direct line, and on the solid principles of *Wisdom* only. Yet now again, in the *ordinary* effusions of the Holy Spirit, this direction of Solomon will be as useful as ever to the interests of Virtue and Religion—ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

T H E K I N G,

IN LENT, MDCCLXI.



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# S E R M O N V.

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PROVERBS, Chap. xiv. ver. 9.

FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN.

**T**HIS strange impiety, the Wise-man fairly marks as the utmost excess of *Folly*: For, having just before told us, that *Fools despise wisdom*, and that they *hate knowledge*, he compleats their character, by observing, that they *make a mock at Sin*.

By the term *fool*, in common life, we understand one whom the powers of *Reason have forsaken*; but Religion gives it to that still more unhappy Being, who *forsakes Reason*; to that miserable Man who, rejecting the Guide which God and Nature have appointed for his direction, suffers himself to be misled by various Impostors, who have ridiculously usurped her name and office.

The Young are generally borne away by the *Passions and Affections*; the Old are mostly drawn aside by *Habit and Custom*; and all ages, both Young and Old, groan under the slavery of FASHION; which yet, with all its airs of superior importance, at last resolves itself into a servile compliance with the caprices of others.

The

The *Passions and Affections* make the fiercest attack upon human Virtue; but Reason being then upon its guard, in its full vigour, and unimpaired by those prejudices, which a long commerce with the World hath made us to contract, if men yield to the sudden violence of the Appetites, they have suffered themselves to be betrayed by indolence, cowardice, a false selfishness, or from some cause which true Wisdom disavows and condemns.

As the Passions overpower and trample upon Reason; so *Habit*, by gentle and insensible degrees, throws it into a kind of Lethargy, which makes it insensible of right and wrong. But whenever it does so, it is by our own fault, a shameful neglect in not calling upon Reason to try and examine our *habits*, by the test she offers; which would presently shew us, what is permitted, and what is to be condemned.

The last and most impudent Impostor of all, is what men call FASHION, which imperiously enjoins submission to the Fancies of others. And this Dominion over *fools* is far more extensive than the other two. Our *love of pleasure* makes us confederate with the Passions, against Reason; our *love of ease* inclines us to fall in with habit against Reason; but it is *Vanity* alone which draws us to follow the FASHION, against her: And Vanity having a more general, as well as more lasting sway, over the human heart, than either appetite or custom, it follows, that more are misled by the *fashion*, which Others give us, than either by the *passions*, which Nature gave us, or by the *habits*, which we give ourselves.

Let us see then the sentiments of each of these slaves of *folly*, with regard to this mortal enemy of our Nature, SIN.

1. The man who is borne away from reason and virtue by the violence of his *Appetites*, has often, during that tempestuous Season, a true sense of his condition; and is ready to confess or to complain, in the words of St. Paul—*The good, which I would, that I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do.* Such a one will be so far from *mocking*, or being disposed to make himself merry with the idea of *Sin*, that he will look on it with horror, from the mischiefs which

which he sees it ready to produce; and on *himself* with resentment and contempt, for the baseness of his subjection to it: So that, while this unequal struggle continues between his Passions and his Reason, he will have very little disposition to preposterous mirth.

2. But when once the criminal gratification of his passions is grown into a *Habit*, the abhorrence of sin is at an end. He looks upon it, in its daily temptations, with the same unconcern that he receives the services of a deformed Domestic; who, at first perhaps, was never seen without dislike or horror, which a familiar converse has long since worn out.—But still, mere *use* and *habit* will never carry the pliant perversity of our Nature much further: It will never bring us to make a *jest* of our Misery, or to try if we can *laugh* Sin out of its nature; and, while its dreadful effects still object themselves to our senses and experience, to *ridicule* it as an empty Phantom, conjured up between the Nurse and the Priest.

3. No. To arrive at this perfection in *Folly*, we must have made the *opinion of other men* the standard of our manners; or, in plainer words, we must have become the FOOLS OF FASHION.

Now, in the polite World, Vice is entertained very differently from the reception it finds amongst Little People: who sin, and are ashamed, and so turn Hypocrites to men; who sin, and are absolved, and so turn Hypocrites to God: While the part of the Man of Fashion is *to sin bravely*: to regard the natural baseness attending the breach of God's commandments, as the ill-bred shame of the Rustic; and repentance, as a kind of poltronery, in which his honour and reputation suffers. So that whenever a serious remonstrance is made to one of these, of the iniquity of his ways, this *Fool of Fashion makes a mock at Sin*, as deriving its fanciful existence from nothing but the sly contrivances of our Civil and our Spiritual Governors.

But as, in the numerous tribe of polite Vices, there are still some higher in *the fashion* than others, and therefore capable of a livelier defence, and deserving of a stronger ridicule on the Reprover; a cursory view of them will be sufficient to shew in which quarter the

the folly lies; whether under the mask of *formal wisdom*, where these Gentlemen direct us to seek it, or in the barefaced pleasantry of their own darling *ridicule*.

The violation of God's holy name by prophane swearing; the abuse of his blessings by a beastly intemperance; and the pollution of his sacred *Image* (in which we were created) by vague Lust; are the three Sins, which the polite world are most disposed to make a *mock* of.

Yet if we be to judge of them by their causes and effects (on which Reason teaches us to estimate moral matters) we must conclude, that nothing can be more offensive to God, more abusive of our own Nature, or more injurious to our fellow-creatures.

God hath vouchsafed unto us the use of his Sacred Name, to convey our praises and supplications to the Throne of Grace; and, on solemn and public occasions, to add a sanction to Truth and Right.—But, in the horrid practice of prophane-swearing, men employ this ever-sacred Name for the garniture of their vanity; to give importance to their pride; or to add terror to their brutal passions, their rage, their hate, or their revenge. They call upon God to witness, and, in effect, dare him to punish, all their silly, lewd, and lying conversation; all that their self-importance, their interest, or their malice, can provoke them to invent, and then, to impose upon their Companions. Can we now conceive a greater insult on the violated majesty of Heaven than this diabolic intemperance of speech? surely none, unless it be to hear these Sons of perdition *mock* and ridicule the Reprover of their blasphemies?

*Luxury* or *Intemperance* is another of these fashionable vices which the Polite rather make the matter of their reputation than their shame. It consists in turning the blessings of Providence to abuse; and the sustentation of nature to its destruction; whereby our very eating and drinking become criminal. But *fashion* sways throughout. The intemperance of our Fathers went one way; the intemperance of their Sons goes another. But it is of small moment which of these brutalities, whether gluttony or the bottle deprives

us of our reason and our health. Either of them is sure to do it; for the certain issue of both is a legion of follies, and an hospital of diseases. Yet so small account does the polite Debauché make of these two noblest gifts of God and Nature, TRUTH and HEALTH, that he is ready to throw them both away for the vain and frivolous reputation of a well-spread Table, or a social Cup: For, *Truth*, the greatest of intellectual goods, is the produce of undisturbed reason; and *Health*, the greatest of the corporeal, is the blooming fruit of temperance: and yet, we can be content to be deprived of both, for the sordid pleasure of a riotous, unmeaning jollity. And, when Religion calls *that* a Sin, which we miscall urbanity and social life, we are ready to *mock* at the *Gospel-morals*, as an Institution unpolite and rustic, and a foe to the elegancies of life.

The fashionable Man as loudly proclaims his folly, when he treats the reproof of *Incontinence or vague Lust* with levity and contempt. This Sin, whether it be the robbery of innocence, or the keeping the miserable object of his Luxury enslaved to impurity and vice, is (amongst other mischiefs) the most atrocious injury to our fellow-creatures.

The dearest treasure of life is Innocence. With this, all the benefits of Fortune receive a double lustre; and with this, we are enabled to bear the worst of her disgraces: for innocence softens the rigours of the seasons; relieves the distresses of poverty; and makes even languor smile upon the bed of sickness. How cruel, then, is that Spoiler who robs the weak and easily-deluded virgin of this greatest blessing and ornament of life. It is a cruelty that sums up all the injuries he can do his neighbour in one. It violates the person; it blasts the reputation; and brings on inevitable distress and penury.

But this Sin rarely stops at the mere destruction of Innocence: it generally compleats its progress, by keeping the unhappy victim of its Luxury chained down to vice and misery, in a continued state of prostitution; preventing, by the basest contrivances, Religion, Reputation, and even common Prudence, from having any force.

to draw them back again, from their ruinous condition, into the paths of virtue and repentance. Yet this is the Sin which the Fool makes his pastime; the subject of his *mockery*; nay even of his boast and triumph.

But the most insolent species of these *prophane Mockers* is still behind. For there are of these, who, not content to *mock* in the common mode of *folly*, love to heighten their buffoonery by the mask of philosophic gravity; and, in the wantonness of change, feel their idle humour best gratified, when they act the voluptuousness of Clodius under the stoical countenance of Cato.

In this temper, they shove the Teacher from his Chair; and tell us that musty Moralists mistake their office; that the blessings of Providence were given us to use, and not to cast away; that they were given us to enjoy, and not to quarrel with; that the *measure* of their use should be regulated by the APPETITES; as the appetites only have the art of making that use an enjoyment: And, for Pedant REASON to assume the office of judging between *good* and *evil*, because it is intrusted to decide between *right* and *wrong*, is as if the Taste should pretend to judge between straight and crooked, because it can distinguish between sweet and bitter. Each Faculty (say they) hath its several department; and with that, all, but *Reason*, are content. This Usurper interferes in every circumstance, and claims the whole government of civil life. Hence the rights of Nature are no less violated in the use of *Persons* than of *Things*, by this assuming Judge and Director; who, in confederacy with her spurious Issue, LAW, hath contrived to make more than *mutual consent* necessary for the possession of the first and general blessing bestowed on man in Paradise. Where neither the Parent *Reason*, nor her stern Progeny, *the Laws*, will commiserate discordancy of temper, or distress of circumstances; but, with relentless rigour, combine to fasten that fatal yoke, which these victims of their cruel policy must submit to wear, till as merciless a Deliverer sets them free. Again (say they) how absurd is it for *Reason* to controul the Appetites at all, even in the general pursuit of pleasure?

PLEASURE

PLEASURE their peculiar object, their native department; for which, all their functions are so properly contrived, and for which, all their sensations are so admirably fitted. *Reason* has no feelings, and therefore should have no jurisdiction in the measure of the enjoyment."

This is the language of the more refined *Mockers* tricked up in the prostituted garb of Science.

One might *answer these fools according to their folly*; one might tell them (though to tell them would only make them *mock* the more) "That this envied Station of imperial *Reason* is no usurpation: that this authority was given her, to secure Humanity in its native dignity: that the *Appetites* mistake their use; they were not given to regulate the enjoyment of good, but to excite us in the pursuit of it: for, one species of good tending to the preservation of the Individual, and another, to the continuance of the Kind, were we not sensually swayed, as well as rationally directed, Inclination would be frequently too slow to answer the temperate calls of nature: therefore has all-wise Providence implanted in its heedless creature, Man, this instinctive impulse of the sensual *Appetites*. Within these limits they may fairly act; but should go no further. They have the office of *Monitor*, but not of *Judge*. This last requires a discernment which blind Appetite hath not; who knows no mean nor measure; can form no ideas of the present, from the past or future; a provisionary faculty necessary to prevent the abuse of good, and its conversion into evil: And this being in the district of *Reason* only, it follows, that she, and she alone, was placed by the Author of Nature as a Curb and Guide to impotent and blind *Instinct*. And in our *use of good*, should Reason be silent till the Appetites call to take away, abstinence would then come too late; for *sensuality* demands much more than the body can dispose of, or properly distribute, for the functions of life and health. Nor is it at all strange, when the Appetites prove thus headstrong, that *Reason* should call in *Law* to her assistance; not the Confederate of her usurpation, but the rightful Associate of

her Office, 'to support her just authority, and to correct what she alone was unable to restrain. And if, in so important a circumstance as connubial relation, they have made the tie thus strong, it was done with the highest moral fitness, as it best tended to promote and to improve the benefits of domestic and civil life. Discordancy of temper would never try to reform its own perversities, while so licentious a relief was still at hand.—And what stronger spur to industry, in the distresses of fortune, than the various Charities of conjugal relation? which, when impaired and weakened, by an easy separation, carry away with them all that manly virtue by which both States and private Houses are supported.

As to *pleasure in general*, the only idea which the Appetites can form of it, are the different degrees, with which the several kinds strike upon the Senses. But admitting, the Appetites could go further, and comprehend both its nature and effects, yet still the bribery of those pleasing sensations would so much bias the inclination as to corrupt all integrity of judgment. Now, in the indulgence of *pleasure*, many nice and distant respects are to be taken in; which no faculty but *Reason* can investigate and collect; or when collected, can set together and compare, in order to assign to each its just weight and moment. What faculty but *Reason* can discern the various effects, which the use of pleasure hath upon the mind and body; or the consequences of it to those with whom we stand related by domestic, civil, or religious connexions? Whether, according to this or that degree of it, it doth not enervate the body, obstruct the agency of the mind, impoverish our Families, debauch the Public, or violate the duties of Religion? All these are necessary considerations; for on these, *HAPPINESS*, that is *real pleasure*, essentially depends. Now Reason only being capable of forming a true judgment in these matters, we conclude, that she, and not the Appetites, is the proper Director in the pursuit of Pleasure.

Thus have I here adventured to expose the egregious folly, and to unmask the extreme corruption of heart, which can assume the Buffoon or the Philosopher indifferently, to laugh at misery and death,

death, and make a mockery both of Law and Religion. For the *Sins*, which the fashionable Person commits with so much ease, and confesses with so much gaiety, the Laws both of God and man have been careful to forbid, and vigilant to punish; as actions destructive of our present, as well as future happiness. How both may resent it, these impious Triflers would do well to consider. For there is so much seditious insolence with respect to the Civil Magistrate, *in making a mock at Sin*, that he will probably think the fittest place for them is Bedlam; and so much impiety towards God, that if the place reserved for reprobate Spirits will admit of any other Guests, they must needs be such as those who most resemble them in their Conditions, such as make a jest of Sin and Misery, and a mockery both of God and Man.



A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

T H E K I N G,

IN LENT, MDCCLXV.



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# S E R M O N VI.

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I C O R. IX. 24.

KNOW YE NOT THAT THEY WHICH RUN IN A RACE, RUN ALL ;  
BUT ONE RECEIVETH THE PRIZE ? SO RUN THAT YE MAY  
OBTAIN.

**T**HE Apostle, proposing to shew to his Converts of *Corinth* the advantages which they, who contend for a heavenly prize, have over those who aspire no higher than an earthly one, illustrates his Argument by a similitude taken from their so celebrated *Olympic Games* ; which contains a reasoning to this effect—

“ Worldly attainments (says he) are like the Contentions in your *Olympic Games* ; where, though the Athletes be many, and the struggle great, yet the prizes are extremely few, and the Success very uncertain ; for that every Adventurer hath an Adversary in every other ; who all strive to cross, to retard, to circumvent him in his Course. On the contrary, they, who aspire to that immortal crown, which *Religion* holds out, as the reward of Faith and Charity, are all sure to win, and be victorious ; the rewards being

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many,

many, as coming from the all-bounteous hand of our heavenly Father; and the assistance great, as afforded by the kind encouragement of our Christian Brethren running the same race with us. Therefore (says the Apostle) do you Corinthians put in for this Prize, which no accidents of time or fortune, nor any thing but your own fault, can hinder you from obtaining: and throw behind you all worldly ambition for that agonistic glory, where you have so small chance of coming off either with honour or advantage."

This the Apostle urges as *one* motive for preferring heavenly pursuits to earthly. In the words which follow my text, he inforces another—*And every man (saith he) who striveth for Mastery is TEMPERATE in all things: Now They do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but We, an incorruptible.—For this purpose*, adds he, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* As much as to say, "The pursuit of a heavenly Crown hath not only these advantages of *certainly* above that aspired to, at the Olympic Games, but they are without any peculiar drawback, since the preparation for the spiritual prize is not more severe than the preparation for the earthly." *If I (says he) a follower of Christ, keep under my body, and bring it into subjection*; the Olympic Racer observes as strict a Discipline—he is temperate in all things.

Such is the force of the Apostle's fine persuasive, to induce the followers of Christ, to prefer the pursuit of spiritual things to things temporal.

All, therefore, I shall have to do, will be only to draw out and develope the reasoning of my text, in such a manner as to impress the force of it on the mind of every serious Hearer. Let us therefore attend to these two important Truths—

1st, That Worldly advantages, when they come to be so considerable as to deserve the name of a *prize*, are of the most uncertain and difficult attainment. And,

2dly, That the immense rewards, which Religion holds out to its faithful Servants, are within the reach of every one: where,  
every

every honest and sincere Aspirant to the *prize* is sure not to be disappointed: for, as in the Words following my text—the Christian Racer *runs not as uncertainly; he so fights, not as one that beateth the air.*

And here let me observe, that the Apostle turned the fairest side outwards, in this representation of worldly pursuits, when he compared them to the contentions in the *Olympic Games*: for in those Games superior Skill and Address bade fairest for the highest *prize*: but in the World at large the prospect is much less favourable.

Wisdom and Industry, the qualities designed both by Providence and by Nature, to procure, for the WORTHY, the fruits of their honest labours, are so crossed and traversed by what the Ignorant call *Chance*, in the disposition of human affairs, that Folly, and random Starts, often get to the goal before them, and snatch away the *prize* from them.

While Solomon, the Wise, considered, but in speculation only, the natural connexion there is between merit and success, he was ready to conclude, that the Rewards of Providence constantly attended the Efforts of Wisdom and Virtue: But when he turned his Contemplations outward, and observed what was doing amongst Men, he gave a very different account of these matters; *I returned* (that is from speculation, and an ideal World), and *then I saw under the Sun* (that is, in practice and in the affairs of men) *that the race is not to the Swift, nor the battle to the Strong; nor yet bread to the Wise; nor yet riches to men of Understanding; nor yet favour to men of Skill: But time and chance happeneth to them all.*

However, let us take this matter at the best, and throw such untoward circumstances aside: Let us suppose, Wisdom and Industry to be as necessary, and as successful, in affairs at large, as Diet and Exercise to an Olympic Racer; and then see, what the Man of the World is to struggle with; what opposition he is to encounter; and how many ways his fairest endeavours are likely to be defeated.

In private Stations, the deserving Candidate for the World's favour is eternally crossed by those two capital enemies of Merit, **IGNORANCE** and **ENVY**. It is hard to say, whose malignancy is most baleful. For if *Ignorance* be less active, its ill influence operates soonest. Rising merit requires early protection and support. *Ignorance* is the Winter of the moral World; which fixes the finer and gentler Spirits in a torpid inactivity; and either destroys, or greatly retards, the earliest and most vigorous productions of the human mind. And those natures of a more hardy texture, which can struggle through its inclemencies, scarce ever attain to half their growth or maturity: While those, who, by a rare felicity in their early culture, escape the severity of this frost of Ignorance, no sooner begin to rise high in the view of men, than they are assaulted from the quarter opposite, from the Dog-star rage of *Envy*.

Nor are the Deserving to expect better treatment from the patronage of their Judges; from those whose condition enables them, or whose stations intrust them to confer these Rewards. They are often ignorant; and as often corrupt. And even such of them who have good intentions, are commonly of so narrow minds and contracted views, as never to seek, or never to reach, a merit become eminent; but content themselves with giving that to Mediocrity, which is due only to superior Talents: while the Corrupt are even vigilant to suppress merit, as a thing troublesome to them, both in their natural dispositions and civil pursuits.

If we turn from private to public life, we shall find, that the *ambitious* Adventurer has still more formidable Dangers to encounter. Here, every man has every other leagued against him; and all ranged under the banners of those leading passions, Malice and Selfishness. Malice will leave no means of calumny and slander untried or unemployed, to arrest him in his course: and Selfishness will secretly put in practice every art of fraud and hypocrisy, to divert and draw him from the goal.

Such

Such is the common issue of human affairs : And hence hath arisen, in every age and place, that uniform complaint of defeated virtue, and of merit neglected; of integrity vainly struggling with corruption, and of wisdom succumbing under the bauble of folly.

Now St. Paul, writing to the *Corinthians*, a People well versed in the knowledge and ways of men ; taught, by long experience, the instability and vanity of human grandeur, wearied out by disastrous tugs with Fortune, and their attention now strongly drawn, by the opening view of *better things* ; St. Paul, I say, takes advantage of this favourable situation, to turn their passions from human objects, so unsuccessfully pursued, towards heavenly, where their well-meant endeavours would always bring them off *more than Conquerors*.

And here, my argument leads me to shew, that, in the pursuit of spiritual acquirements, all things are as promising and easy; as they are discouraging and difficult in the disastrous projects of worldly Ambition. Instead of anxiety, toil, labour, opposition, oppression, and final disappointment ; all Here is peace and pleasure ; joy in believing, divine assistance in obtaining, and full security in possessing. For,

1st, A struggle for celestial Honours has the advantage of the worldly, in this, that All win the prize who have the noble ambition to contend for it. In the worldly Race below, *all run* (says the Apostle) *but one receiveth the prize* : And (says history and experience) THAT ONE is, generally, the most worthless of the contenders.

2dly, In pursuit of worldly matters (as hath been observed) all our concurrents are our enemies, and do all they can to hinder and divert us in our course. In the pursuit of spiritual things, all our concurrents are our friends—are our coadjutors. The only strife amongst good men, in the race to Heaven, is, who shall lend the best assistance to his labouring brother : The slow is helped forward ; the weak is supported ; the backward reprov'd ; the desponding encouraged ; and the fallen raised up.

3dly,

3dly, The third advantage which the Aspirant to divine felicity has over the vain seeker after earthly honours, is the proper qualification of the Adventurers. In worldly pursuits, when all other impediments are away, there is need of great and uncommon abilities, either of mind or body ; such as health, courage, activity, industry, vigilance, and a capacity of knowledge and eloquence. In spiritual concerns, our success depends solely on ourselves ; in meaning well, and acting honestly. This supports our confidence, and secures us from all irresolute anxiety ; the bane of life, which clogs our endeavours, imbitters our sweetest prospects, and frequently defeats our best-laid schemes of happiness.

4thly, The last difference, so infinitely to the advantage of religious pursuits, which I shall beg leave to enforce, is in the stability of the things aimed at.—Could the successful aspirant after earthly things secure to himself the possession of the *prize* he has obtained, for any reasonable time ; or spend, what is called, a *Life* in the enjoyment of it ; some little might be said in his excuse—nothing, indeed, to justify the wisdom of his choice ; yet something, however, to excuse the folly of his prevention. But, alas ! the case is much otherwise. His glory shrinks like a shadow from his gripe, even while he is attending to the acclamations of his triumph. Either the time, employed in the pursuit, hath drawn out life to its dregs ; or the fatigues, attendant on the contest, have broken and destroyed the basis of his Frame and Constitution ; so that the Garland, woven to celebrate his Victory, serves only to ornament his Herse. Or, if haply he succeed while in the full vigour of life, he is then often to undergo a second struggle, as hazardous, and generally more toilsome, than the first—to preserve from the Envious what he had fairly won from his Emulators.

But he who *runs the race which Religion sets before us*, is subject to none of these reverses of fate or fortune. All is peace, and *joy in believing* here below ; and hereafter the sure possession of an *eternal Crown of Glory*.

Since

Since then it is so clearly seen on which side the advantage lies, let us act like Men ; like such who know how to form a reasonable Choice ; and make our greatest interest our principal concern.

But then, in this spiritual Adventure, let us carry with us our worldly prudence : *Let us not so run* (to use the Apostle's expression) *as one that beateth the air*. Let us not give ear either to the delusions of Bigotry or Fanaticism. Let us not deceive ourselves, with the fancy that we may, on the one hand, obtain the *prize*, by the observance of idle and superstitious Ceremonies ; or, on the other, by the delusive feelings, or extatic visions of Enthusiasm : but let us, as the same divine Guide directs us, *so run that we may obtain* : that is, advance steadily in that sober Course, which the Gospel has marked out to us—*of repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* ; under the guidance, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.



# S E R M O N VII..

SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.

Vol. V.

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# S E R M O N VII.

## SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.

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MAT T. chap. XXII. ver. 12.

AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, FRIEND, HOW CAMEST THOU IN HITHER, NOT HAVING A WEDDING GARMENT? AND HE WAS SPEECHLESS. THEN THE KING SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, BIND HIM HAND AND FOOT, AND TAKE HIM AWAY.—

**I**N this Parable of the marriage-feast of the King's Son, a select company was first bidden; and they refusing the invitation, every wanderer that occurred was indiscriminately entertained. The Parable was told by our blessed Master, to shadow out the *nature* and *fortune* of his Gospel; first offered to the chosen people of God, the *Jews*; and, on their rejection of it, laid open to the acceptance of the *Gentiles* of every denomination. So far concerning the *general fortune* of the Gospel.

But in that part of it from whence the words of my text are taken, its *peculiar nature* is, in a very lively manner, set before us. The *bidding* to a marriage-feast is a free and gracious favour; and

that Guest was deemed unworthy of it who did not come in such a habit as was the customary mark of his receiving the honour done him, with reverence and gratitude. The *Wedding Garment* was the symbolum which admitted him to the Feast: to be found without it, was an evidence of his being an Intruder; and justly subjected him to the resentment of the Lord and Founder of the entertainment. For in ancient times it was the custom for him who was bidden to a marriage, to come in a robe of ceremony, so fashioned and adorned as to be expressive of the Characters and Circumstances of the wedded Pair, by which it became a badge denoting the relation he bore unto them.

Now, this Marriage was the Marriage of Christ with his Church: and the Feast to which the Elect were invited, was *life and immortality*. So that if we consider the state and condition of things, the *Wedding Garment* will appear to mean nothing but FAITH in Christ the Saviour; this sacred badge being peculiarly characteristic of the nature and genius of the Gospel. So that the worthy-bidden Guest was he who was *cloathed upon* (as the Apostle expresses it) *with Christ Jesus*.

In its more general turn, the Parable was fitted to represent every age of the Church. Some who were bidden would not come; and some who accepted the invitation would come irreverently and prophanely; would be so far from complying with the terms of the invitation, as insolently to affix to it different terms of their own.

But no Age hath so well exemplified the disobedience and insult held forth in the Parable, as that in which we live. Most of those who are *bidden* now slight the invitation; and many of those who condescend to come, dishonour the feast by rejecting the condition on which they are to be received, FAITH IN THE MESSIAH, the *Wedding Garment* of the Church of Christ.

We read, in the text, that when he, who came without the appropriated Robe, was reprov'd for his neglect, *he was speechless*. But the Ministers of the Gospel must not expect to have our irreligious

ligious Convicts at this advantage. They are ready addressed to reason with us, and shew that “the crime we lay so much stress upon, is at worst only the rejection of a new-fashioned Garb: that though they be without their Robe of ceremony, yet their Heart is right; they honour the Lord of the feast, and *reverence* his Son; they so square their life, as to be worthy of God’s favour and friendship: and for the rest, they are sure, he will never quarrel with them for a punctilio.” In a word (to speak out of the terms of the Parable) the new-fangled modern Christian is sure, he says, that “the man who observes the *moral Law*, shall, without any more ado, be intitled to the favour of his Maker, and consequently, to all the benefits of Christ’s Gospel: for how *faith in Jesus* can *justify* him, or be the very thing which shall intitle him to eternal life, he cannot comprehend: that it may be of use as a viaticum here, he will not deny, since Jesus has more clearly explained the nature and rectified the practice of the *moral Law*, and so is his best Instructor in its *righteousness*: but how this *Faith* should be the only Introducer to God’s presence hereafter, while the *moral man*, laden deep with *good works*, is kept without—*credat Judæus Apella*.”—Such is the confident talk of the PHILOSOPHERS of our time. Yet, *justification by faith alone* is the constant language of the Gospel.

And to shew that it is not the language of Fanaticism, I shall endeavour to evince the *reasonableness* of the Christian doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and of the *necessity* of FAITH to obtain the promises of the Gospel. By which the egregious folly of expecting to obtain them on any other condition will amply appear.

Let us then, in compliance with the false notions of these men, suppose that a strict and uniform obedience to the *moral Law* will intitle us to *everlasting life*; and the rather, because St. Paul, in his reasoning with the Jews, seems to concede (though by way of argument *ad homines*) that had they observed a strict and uniform obedience to the *Law*, it would have given *life*; and *righteousness*,

as

as he expresses it, *had been of the Law*: but that, failing in this, they were brought into a state of *death*; from which they could be redeemed only *by faith in Jesus*.

Now, were this strictly true, what would the race of Adam be the better for so vain a title? For who of us, except him who was the Son of God as well as of Adam, ever preserved his integrity inviolate, and did not frequently deviate from moral rectitude? though he might as often recover himself, and by repentance and amendment put in again for God's mercy and favour; yet still man had irrevocably forfeited all claim to *eternal life*, even though *eternal life* had, indeed, been attendant on strict uniform obedience.

Nor let any one imagine, from what he thinks he can collect of the light of Nature, concerning God's readiness to pardon a returning sinner, and to receive him into his favour, that this grace consists in a restoration to *eternal life*. Such a fancy is founded in a mistaken notion that *eternal life* is the debt or wages, or covenanted reward, of our sincere and careful endeavours to obey the *moral Law* of God. The light of Nature gives us a very different view of things. It sets before us the infinite disparity between our imperfect obedience, in this momentary state, and the reward of *eternal life* in a better. If we will believe the Apostle, it teaches this, and this only, *that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him*; and that the good *moral man* who misses of his reward here, will find it hereafter: that the reward, indeed, will be abundant; for though we be *unprofitable Servants*, yet is he a most bountiful Master. But *abundant* and *eternal* belong to different systems.

This Truth, so clearly deduced from natural Reason, Revelation supports and confirms. *Eternal life* in this Dispensation never being so much as once represented in holy Scripture as the *constitutional reward* of the virtuous man's practice, but always as the *free gift* of God.

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The consequence of which truth is, that if this *free gift* were offered on Condition (and that it was, all sides are agreed), the Condition must be of a thing different from that virtuous life which hath God's favour naturally annexed to it.

Accordingly we find, that the condition was, in fact, different. When life and immortality was first offered to Adam, the condition was the observance of a *positive* command, *not to eat of the forbidden fruit*: and when, after the forfeiture of this free Inheritance by the first man's disobedience, we were restored to life by the death and sufferings of Christ, the condition was another *positive* command, *faith in the Messiah*. And here the goodness and compassion of the Godhead to miserable man are most eminent. *Eternal life* was, as we say, first given on the observance of a *positive* command, a command to do or to forbear doing; and therefore was almost as soon forfeited as it was bestowed. And we may reasonably conclude, from the weakness and perversity of human nature, that as often as it was bestowed on the same condition, it would be as often forfeited: To secure, therefore, so precious a gift to the forfeited Offspring of Adam (for a condition was not annexed, to tantalize our hopes, but to exercise our obedience) God hath finally revealed the condition of *eternal life*, to be something to be believed, instead of something to be observed. From henceforth the gift was no longer precarious, but secure and certain. So much order, reason, and beauty, are to be found in the various Dispensations of Religion!

And here let me observe, that the not distinguishing between, the Rewards objected to the encouragement of obedience by *natural*, and those by *revealed* Religion, hath been the sole cause of those dark and endless Debates concerning *Justification by Faith*: For while one Party explained away this fundamental Principle of the Gospel, the Other supported it by arguments which debase human Reason, and dishonour the divine Attributes. In the mean time, this *distinction alone* (equally founded in Reason and Revelation,

lation, and confounded between folly and sophistry) would have relieved the labouring cause of Truth from all the absurdities and impieties employed in its defence.—But, how the Doctrine of *Salvation by FAITH ALONE* can consist with the other, of *the necessity of good works to obtain the favour of God*, and how that which hath a *condition annexed*, and a *price paid*, can be called a **FREE GIFT**, will be shewn at large in another place. It sufficeth at present, that the Key to this Mystery is here intrusted to your keeping.

And now, to apply this Scripture-Doctrine of *Eternal life by Faith*, to the consideration of all who call themselves Christians.

I will presume, that the aim of all such is to obtain the *Gospel-rewards*: for, though, in the fashionable language of the *mere moral Christian*, they ask no more than the *favour of God*, yet they consider this *favour* as only another name for *eternal life*. But this *moral Christian* must have a very high opinion of the perfection of his Morals, if he can imagine that, because *natural Religion* tells him, it will intitle him to God's *favour*, that therefore it will intitle him to *eternal life*; a free gift, which Revelation brings to light, and offers on a different condition, namely, *Faith in the Messiah*. Such a fancy is indeed attempting the *Kingdom of heaven by force*. But it is not that force which Scripture recommends, of *faith and prayer*, but the prophane violence of human presumption. And of what is miserable man so vain?—*The morality* of his actions. Yet are these, for the most part, little better than his more shining frailties. And an ancient Father, if he considered them in the concrete rather than the abstract, did not calumniate, when he called them, *splendida peccata*.

Let a man examine the *Condition* of his Morals, and he will find such bias of appetite, such heat of passion, and such obliquity of self-interest, as cannot but stain and sully all the purity of Virtue. Or if it escape this pollution, yet the silent influences of Habit and Constitution so mix themselves with the true motive to moral

moral practice (the sense of duty) that he will find its intrinsic value greatly alloyed. If he consider the *Qualification* of his Morals, he will generally find them pushed too far, or else stopping short of the point of perfection. If he consider the *Uniformity* of his Morals, he will find them receiving perpetual interruption, from negligence and inattention, from secular cares and pursuits, from strong appetites, and from stronger temptations: and if, after this, he will still persist in thinking *such Morals* deserving of an *eternal reward*, he will give us, in his *Modesty*, a still stronger evidence of the futility of human Virtue.

But he will say, "It is not so much human merit as the mercies of God (which Natural Religion teaches to be infinite, those mercies which Divines call the *uncovenanted*) whereon he relies for the attainment of *eternal life*."

It is certain that God's *goodness and mercy* are infinite: and had we only these to bring into the account, we might perhaps be left to conclude, that when God thinks fit to reward, he rewards in proportion to them, that is, *infinitely*, or at least so abundantly, as to surpass all human conception. But we reckon too fast, and, in our estimate, forget, that though his *goodness and mercy* be infinite, his *Wisdom and his Justice* are so likewise: And what abatement the consideration of these latter attributes may make in the rewards due to human Virtue, we have seen already. Nay, though his *Justice* might not exact a severe balance on the account, yet his *Wisdom* might. It may (for aught natural Reason hath discovered to the contrary) be necessary to the moral Government of the Universe, that the most severe example should be made of man wilfully wicked. And nothing can clear up this dark and doubtful prospect, and set the overwearied mind at rest, but REVELATION: Which, by teaching the *atonement* of Christ once offered on the Cross, shews us that God's *Justice*, from which we had reason to expect such dreadful abatements in the rewards due to human virtue, is appeased and disarmed; and by proposing *eternal*

*nal life through faith*, satisfies us that his *Wisdom*, in the government of the Universe, does not require the severest punishment for Sin.

Yet our modern Masters of reason think it a high point of philosophic wisdom, rather to rely on the *uncovenanted* mercies of God, which Natural Religion so obscurely holds out to us, than on those *covenanted* mercies which the Revealed hath so openly and clearly laid before us.

But now, these men perhaps may say, “We rest perfectly satisfied with the Reward, whatever it may prove, which Natural Religion tells us we shall receive at the hand of God, for our sincere endeavours to deserve his favour and protection.”

But, I am afraid, this false modesty will be found as absurd as it is impious; and that those who will not labour for the whole reward, which Revelation offers, will lose even that which Natural Religion may encourage them to seek.

Those *without* the Church of Christ may be distinguished and divided into such who have never been sufficiently informed of the *saving name* of Jesus; and such who, on a sufficient proposal of it to their acceptance, have thought fit to reject it.

How those will be dealt with who lie bound in *invincible ignorance*, the grace and benignity of our holy Religion does more than intimate. It expressly teaches, that the merits of Christ's death and passion have a retrospect to all times and ages since Adam, on whose trespasss this Redemption rises. It was for the whole Race of mankind that Christ died. So, it seems most equitable, that those whom his name never reached should have the same right to the benefits of his death, *by their morals*, that those who believe in him have *by their Faith*.

As this best suits the gracious *nature* of an *universal Religion*, so it seems necessary that, for the support of its *dignity*, those who, after a sufficient invitation to accept the terms of salvation by Jesus, have, by the misguidance of their passions, wilfully and knowingly rejected

rejected it, should, together with that, lose all their claim to what Natural Religion (the foundation on which Revelation stands), had encouraged them to expect.

Our *Moralists* then, if indeed they aspire to the *favour* of God, are reduced to this distress, either to call in FAITH to procure for them *eternal life*; or else, if they will admit no Associate to their *Morality*, to rest contented with what the disinterested pursuit of Virtue can afford them.—All that we can do further for them is to pray to God to direct them in their choice.



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S E R M O N VIII.

THE BENEFITS OF HERESY.

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# S E R M O N      V I I I .

## THE BENEFITS OF HERESY.

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1 C O R . X I . 19.

THERE MUST BE ALSO HERESIES AMONGST YOU, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST AMONGST YOU.

**I**N this observation, the Apostle hints at one condition of the *moral World*, inseparable, as it is at present constituted, from its existence, a mixture of truth and falsehood, analogous to things salutary and noxious in the *Natural*. But, in both Worlds, the good produced by this mixture is so eminent as fully to support the trite observation, that *Evil was suffered for the sake of a greater good*. Yet was God so far from *constituting* evil in the moral world for the sake of that good which it occasioned, that the whole of this Ordinance was *good*: out of which the folly and perversity of Man produced *evil*. If it be asked, how God came to suffer this perversion? The answer is, the subject was *free-agency*, which  
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was not to be controlled.—All that, according to our ideas, could be done, without impinging upon it, was done, by God's turning the natural tendency of *evil* to the production of *new good*. So that God and Man have been perpetually at strife; the One to produce good out of evil; the other, to produce evil out of good.

The greatest good ever vouchsafed ungrateful Man was *Salvation by the Gospel of Jesus*. Yet was he no sooner possessed of this blessing than he abused it, by the production of Heresies and false Opinions. Out of which evil, God again, according to his gracious way of working, produced new good; a species of which is here mentioned in my text, the *manifestation* of the *approved*.—*There must be Heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest amongst you.*

I shall therefore consider these two particulars, Who are meant by the *approved*; and what is the nature and end of their *manifestation*.

I. The false Opinions obtruded on the Church of Christ, and taught as articles of Faith, which the Apostle calls *Heresies*, made their fortune amongst the People, either by flattering the levity of their minds, or by soothing the corruption of their hearts. They either pretended to clear up mysteries, to resolve difficulties, and, by new lights, to lead us further into Truth; or else to allow of practices, to which the written Law of the Gospel, and the received discipline of the Church, gave no indulgence. In a word, to be *wise above what is written*, and to be set at large from what is commanded.

Now the Teachers of such Doctrines would not fail of willing Hearers. All the vain and the vicious; the lovers of novelty and the lovers of pleasure; all who prided themselves in thinking with the Few; or had degraded themselves by acting with the Many. All such would be easily caught in these well-baited traps of *Heresy*.

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The only security from these snares was MODESTY or VIRTUE. The *modest man* would remain pure from the itch of novelty, and an over-eager appetite for those sublime Doctrines which the antient *Heretics* pretended to have received in trust for the use of their followers : And the *virtuous man* would become prejudiced against all Practices which opened a door to libertinism and concupiscence. All these would be naturally led to make comparisons between the rank Doctrines of their new Teachers, and the simplicity, the clearness, the rationality, and the purity, of what was delivered in the Gospel. And the parallel would end in a more full conviction of the Truth, and a warmer adherence to its interests. To These, the Apostle gives the name of the APPROVED.

II. But the great good here hinted at, as arising from the evil of Heresies, is that the *Approved* may be made MANIFEST : Of which *manifestation* we are now to consider the nature and the end.

1. Its nature is seen, first, in a constant and public adherence to the doctrines of the Catholic Church ; in affording no countenance to the disturbers of its peace, either by neglecting the public offices of the established worship, or by frequenting the assemblies of Separatists : and, at the same time, in shewing (if they be able) the reasonableness and defending the truth of the orthodox opinions, and in laying open the sophistry and absurdity of heretical novelties.

2. Secondly, It is seen in the exercise of the most perfect Charity to the persons of Heretics : employing only brotherly persuasion, enforced by manly reasoning, to draw them from their errors, and bring them back to the sheepfold of Christ. And when these prove ineffectual, then to leave them to the righteous judgment of God : neither employing coercive power ourselves, nor willingly suffering it to be employed by others. In a word—to use, for their reduction, no severity but that of Reason, and no force but that of Prayer.

The benefit to the Church, in this *manifestation*, respects both the *approved* themselves, and also their Christian Brethren of the same Community.

1. The *profession* of our Faith is represented in Scripture as a warfare with the World ; and that *the life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel* is the reward of our Victory in this Contest. It was fit therefore that so great a gift should be earned by some proportionate labour and hazard. Hence every age of the Church hath had its trials : At one time, Persecutions ; at another, Heresies and Schisms ; and at another, a general Defection from the Faith. All for the accomplishment of the wise ends of Providence : many of them inscrutable to us : of some, Reason directs us to form probable conjectures ; and of some again we have a full knowledge, from Revelation : Of this last sort is the truth recorded in my text, *that there must be Heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest.*

Amongst the various conflicting evils of the Church, this of *Heresies* was one of the first. And its use to the *Approved* consists in its being a severe and salutary trial of their FAITH and VIRTUE.

The mind of man is naturally delighted with *Novelties* : and if the *Novelties* be such as do not directly oppose, but pretend only to explain and rectify his received opinions, he will be tempted to regard them with a favourable eye.

A pretence to sublimer knowledge, which is ever the boast of *Heresy*, will strongly incline Humanity, naturally vain, and aspiring to things beyond its reach, to listen to these seducers.

Doctrines which flatter the corruption of the heart, and humour the perversity of the will, as heretical doctrines always do, will be apt to gain a ready entrance into the unfortified and unguarded Mind.

But they are not only our *Vices* but our *Virtues* likewise which expose men to the delusions of *Heresy*.

*Humility,*

*Humility*, or a low opinion of ourselves, disposes us to give ear to all such who, with the confidence of authority, offer to teach us things important, and, till now, unknown to us: And *Modesty*, sure attendant on humility, is apt to interpret that confidence into a mark of certainty of knowledge.

*Charity* will not suffer us to suspect that those who cast aside all temporal consideration for themselves, can have any other view than the interests of truth: And *Christian Simplicity*, the offspring of Charity, leads us to conclude, that when such men suffer all kind of evil for the support of their Opinions, nothing less than the power of truth can support them in such a conflict.

In a word, the *love of Virtue* itself inclines us much in favour of men who, as Heretics frequently do, lead a life of temperance, chastity, justice, and beneficence.

When, therefore, both our worst and our best qualities equally conspire to betray us into *heretical* opinions, it must be a more than ordinary fortitude in Faith, and sobriety in Virtue, which can preserve us safe from these delusions, and bring us off, as the Apostle says, *approved*.

And as, in the course of this trial, the faith of the *approved* must needs be rectified and established, and their virtue purified and perfected, the good produced by it makes sufficient amends to God's Church for the ill permitted in these tares of heresy thus sown by the *Evil one*.

But still, this is not the whole good produced in thus *manifesting the approved through heresies*. Another, and indeed the principal, is the useful **EXAMPLE** of the *approved*, to the Church or Congregation of the faithful; the gross body of which have neither understandings nor hearts of sufficient strength to detect, or defend themselves from, the arts of cunning and industrious seducers, such as the Leaders in *Heresy* generally are. Or if, haply, they have been taught to keep out of their snares, they are too apt to run into the opposite extreme, violating all the rules of justice in their treatment of these Disturbers of the Church's peace.

Now the *EXAMPLE* of the *approved* is of great use to the body of the Faithful in both these respects; to fortify their *reason* against delusion; and, when that is done, to restrain their *passions* against the deluders.

The strongest argument with the People for the truth of their religious Opinions, is the seeing them maintained and supported by men, whose learning, parts, and piety, they hold in reverence. This is a species of moral evidence most flattering to the capacity of the Vulgar; such of the Vulgar, I mean, whose natural modesty, or conscience of their own weakness, is not quite effaced by the heat and fumes of Enthusiasm.—An argument founded in the eternal nature of things, and formed on the rules of severe logic, is, in their gross conceptions, a slippery support to their Faith; and, in comparison of an argument which rises on a great name and a specious authority, very cloudy and evanide.

The influence, therefore, which the *example* of great and good men has on the minds of the People, is exceeding powerful.

Nor is the *CONDUCT* of the *approved* towards *Heretics* and *Schismatics* less serviceable to the Church of Christ. Moderation is not the lot of the People. They approve and execrate; they love and hate with violence: and when once they have condemned the innovation, which they are readily induced to do, on observing it to be condemned by those they most esteem and venerate, they are easily led to oppose the Innovators with a violence which both natural equity and the genius of Christianity forbid. Now here again the Example of the *Approved* is of sovereign efficacy to teach them charity and moderation. And this Example is so powerful, that there is no instance to be found of a persecuting spirit which hath long continued, or arrived to any height, but where the men in most credit for their stations, abilities, and dazzling virtues, have encouraged and led it on. And whenever such have, by their conduct, been seen to disapprove of violent measures, the folly and rage of the People have presently subsided.

Thus

Thus amply rewarded are the *Approved* of my text, for all they undergo in this trial, by the benefit they procure to the Public in their **EXAMPLE**. And thus is the *evil of heresies*, by the gracious disposition of things, turned to *good*, and *heresy*, by a contrary exertion, made to produce those two capital Gospel-virtues, **FAITH AND CHARITY**. So admirable a vindication of God's general Providence does the sense of my text contain—*there must be heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest amongst you.*



# S E R M O N IX.

Preached at BRISTOL, November 29, MDCCCLIX.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

PUBLIC THANKSGIVING,

FOR VICTORIES OBTAINED BY THE BRITISH ARMS.



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S E R M O N IX.

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E Z E K I E L XXXVI. 22.

FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, I DO NOT THIS FOR  
YOUR SAKES, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL ! BUT FOR MY HOLY NAME  
SAKE. ,

**G**OD, by his Prophet, having here foretold the unmerited blessings which he had in store for the *House of Israel*; lest this wretched People should become vain in their imaginations, and fancy that these mercies were reserved for them, as the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, thought fit to mortify their folly in the words of my text—*I do not this for your sakes, O House of Israel ! but for my holy name sake.* As much as to say, “ Be careful not to mistake the purpose of these promised blessings, as if they were the reward of your Virtues; for, by your repeated Crimes you have long since forfeited all claim to my special protection: nor yet mistake them for the effects of any partial fondness which your vanity may make you presume I have for you. I employ you only as the Instruments (and this is an honour you little deserve) for

carrying on the grand system of my moral government ; which requiring that some one Nation should be set apart for the Repository of the knowledge of the true God, I have, in honour of my faithful Servant, your Father Abraham, chosen you for the Ministers of this sacred Trust,"

To this purpose does the divine Majesty of Heaven speak to his *chosen People* in the words of my text. And as all *Scripture is written for our instruction, to whom the ends of the world are come*, let us conceive that, to the same purpose, he now speaks to us on this joyful occasion ; which the piety of Government has thought fit to sanctify, by the appointment of a public thanksgiving for the late great mercies bestowed upon this Nation, in a seasonable Plenty and civil harmony at home ; and in the unparalleled successes of the British arms abroad.

The nature of these domestic blessings, after having been for some time alarmed with a suspension of them, in penurious Harvests and divided Councils, is best understood by the happy difference in our feelings. As to the high importance of our successes abroad against the Common Disturber of the peace of Europe—this is a matter to be left to the Politician. On this occasion, I presume, I shall discharge my duty better, in attempting to explain to you those dispositions and sentiments of piety with which you should possess yourselves, to make this grateful offering acceptable to your gracious Protector.

If therefore you be *more ready to HEAR, than to give the sacrifice of Pools*, you should consider, *For whose sake*, Reason tells you, these great blessings have been conferred upon you : for, on this you are to regulate the testimony of your gratitude. Now Reason will never direct you to conclude, that they were given *for your sakes*, unless there be a greater portion of sobriety, virtue, and religion amongst yourselves, than is to be found in the rest of the Christian world. Now if this rare series of good fortune hath not quite intoxicated you (as good fortune is too apt to do), a slight view of the moral condition of these Kingdoms would soon cure you  
of

of all such vain imaginations. For where is the holy Faith in Jesus more openly despised by the Great, or more vilely ridiculed by the little People, than in this our Island? A love of the Public is now laughed at, as the Chimera of the young and unexperienced : a general Corruption, under the name of Prudence, walks bare-faced ; and as general a pursuit of Pleasure, miscalled Happiness, bears down before it all the relations and charities of civil and domestic life. Christian candour, therefore, will not be offended, if, on this view of things, I address you, my Countrymen and Brethren, in the words of the Prophet—*Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, but for my holy name sake.*

If we turn from the merits of the Contenders to the merits of the Cause, neither Party, I am afraid, will have reason to expect any very distinguished interposition of Providence in their favour. Let us estimate the original claim of European Nations to American possessions, on the severe Principles of Natural and Civil Laws ; and then lay our hand on our heart, and ask it seriously, Whether the unadjusted claims of the contending nations to desarts of their own making, in the new world, be such a quarrel, as that in which the Creator of all men, the equal Father of the human race, is likely, in any extraordinary manner, to interfere? Let us do this, and we shall hardly have an answer much to the satisfaction of our vanity.

We should, therefore, seek for a cause of these uncommon mercies, more worthy the Majesty of Heaven. And we should seek for it somewhere in the course of God's general Providence, in the moral government of the world. And if there we find it, we shall soon see, that the blessings bestowed were *not for our sakes, but for his holy name sake.*

God, for the great ends of his universal providence, inscrutable to us, was pleased to station his favoured creature Man in a world abounding with natural and moral evil.

But this gracious God, whose mercies are over all his works, hath, as a curb and check to these evils, which it is man's duty,

as well as interest, to oppose ; and his merit as well as happiness to subdue ; instituted two capital ordinances, CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION : Supports as necessary for the Moral World, as the SUN and MOON for the Natural : the One, to sustain and cheer us in this vale of miseries ; the Other, to direct our benighted footsteps towards the happier regions of light and immortality.

We may be certain, therefore, that the same Providence, which keeps the celestial orbs in their courses, will be ever watchful that these two MORAL LIGHTS suffer no extinction or irretrievable decay. For as neither *Comets* above, nor *Ignes fatui* below, can supply the use of those Luminaries, so neither can *despotic rule* or *wild fanaticism* supply the use of these.

Yet as the moral world, for very obvious reasons, is infinitely more subject to disorder than the natural, it may sometimes happen that these *moral lights* shall suffer such dreadful eclipses, and have their splendor so polluted and impaired, as to shine purely no where, and brightly only in some small obscure corner of the Globe. Thus, for instance, the blessing of Civil Liberty, the source of all human happiness, was, for many ages, totally extinct ; and the knowledge of the Deity himself, the fountain-head of Truth, was, for as many more, confined within the narrow limits of the land of Israel.

Now this being the precarious condition of the *moral world* in general, let us see what may be the actual state of CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION at present on the earth.

As to the former, if we look round us, from the nearest to the remotest Continent, we shall no where find a *Society* founded on the true Principles of Civil Liberty. Either the nature of its Convention hath been so ill conceived (as in the *East*) that the absolute despotic *Form* hath been mistaken for the immediate Institution of Heaven ; and, consequently, every species of free Government for essential Licence and Impiety : or else, where the rights of mankind have been better understood (as in the *West*), where the three legitimate *Forms*, the Monarchic, the Aristocratic, and the Popular,

Popular, have been truly discriminated, yet men seeing that civil freedom was naturally confined to these three *Forms*, erroneously concluded, that each of them separately, and *unmixed* with the other two, was able to sustain all the rights and advantages of it : not considering that, while they operate singly, they are but the same Tyranny in a different shape : For while each *Form* exists alone, the whole Sovereignty resides in a part only of the Community, which subjects the rest to despotic rule.

But true and lasting Liberty results from the skilful combination of the three *Forms* with one another ; where each of the Orders, which governs absolutely in each *Form*, hath its due share of the Sovereign Power, and no more. Here all impotency of rule is eternally excluded ; for no man, or body of men, can exercise Tyranny over itself.

A Government, thus truly free, is like one of those sovereign Medicines, so much spoken of, where each of the various ingredients of which it is composed, does, together with its virtues, contain such noxious qualities, that, if used simply and alone, might occasion great disorders, but when skilfully intermixed with the rest, the whole hath corrected the noxious qualities and exalted the salutary virtues of each part.

Whenever such a well-composed Society becomes despotic, it must be by the silent dissolution of its complex Form ; as when one Order usurping on the rest, hath gotten the whole of the Sovereignty to itself.

With so happy a Constitution of Government hath it pleased Divine Providence to bless this Island ; the honoured Repository of sacred Freedom, at a time when almost all the other civilized Nations have betrayed their trust, and delivered up civil Liberty, the most precious gift of Nature, for a prey to their fellow-creatures.

Now the preservation of this sacred Ordinance being no less necessary to the temporal welfare of man, than the knowledge of the true God is to his spiritual, we must conclude, that the same gracious Providence would be now no less watchful, for the preservation

tion of the British nation, than it was of old, for the Jewish : yet still speaking the same language to both—*I do not this for your sakes, but for my holy name sake.*

If we turn from *Government* to RELIGION, we shall have the same reason to adore the gracious Majesty of Heaven still working for his *holy name sake*, that is, for the general good of mankind. For though it would be vanity to boast, in this case as in the other, that true Religion, like civil Liberty, is to be found only in Great Britain, when we behold the Protestant Faith, professed in the purity of the Gospel, in so many of our kindred Churches on the Continent, yet this we cannot but declare, and should always acknowledge with the utmost gratitude, that the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, by means of the mighty power of its Imperial HEAD, is become the Fortress and Bulwark of the Protestant profession throughout the world ; and therefore, we may be assured, the object of God's peculiar regard ; whose special Providence works chiefly for general ends.

In the course of this quarrel, it hath been sometimes said, that the present combustion in Europe was to be regarded in the light of a RELIGIOUS WAR, against a Confederacy animated by Romish Superstition and Tyranny : and sometimes again, that it broke out and was carried on only for the discussion of our civil Interests. But in whatever shifting lights it may suit the ends of Politicians to present it, the *Lord of Hosts* himself, by so visibly *fighting our battles*, hath fully decided the question, and in the midst of victory hath declared it to be indeed a RELIGIOUS WAR : for human presumption itself will never venture to account for such distinguished mercies to a sinful nation any otherwise, than by considering Great Britain in the light, as of the sole remaining Trustee of *Civil Freedom*, so of the great Bulwark of *Gospel Truth*.

Let us, therefore, on this day of Triumph, and perhaps more suitably on this day than any other, *bumble ourselves* before the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven, confess our total unworthiness of these distinguished mercies, and echo back again to the Throne  
of

of grace those awful words which once proceeded from it—"We confess, O almighty Father, that the great things which thou hast done for us, *were not done for our sakes, but for thy holy name sake.*"

Nor will this consideration abate, but, on the contrary, increase our Gratitude and Joy.

Our *Gratitude*, for the honour done us, in being made the Instruments, in the hand of God, for supporting and carrying on the great System of his moral Government.

Our *Joy*, in the most enlarged exercise of Christian Charity; while we consider Great Britain as become, by God's special appointment, the common Benefactor of Mankind.

But these sentiments are not suitably expressed by the mere explosions of our mouth, in solemn praises easily discharged: they are to be manifested in the service of our lives, which now becomes doubly due; a service regulated on the nature and end of the Blessings bestowed: for, without the knowledge of these blessings, our praises may be presumption, and our service but a busy impertinence.

To assist you, therefore, my Brethren, in your good purposes, I have kept you thus long, in explaining what I take to be the true nature and design of the blessings we now commemorate. If we be made sensible that they were bestowed for the *sake* of this Repository of Civil Liberty, this Bulwark of the Christian Faith, we shall easily understand what returns we ought to make for them.

If *Civil Liberty*, the source of all worldly Good, be so precious in the sight of God, and yet its influence, in the revolutions of state, so contracted, and its very existence so precarious, How great should be our care, with whom the small remains of it are now intrusted, that we ourselves contribute nothing to the further diminution of it!

By what hath been already observed to you, it is manifest that this glorious Fortress of British Liberty can never be taken by storm;

storm ; however liable it may be to the silent decays of Time, and to the secret undermine of wicked men.

To provide therefore against these mischiefs, we should discountenance and oppose ourselves to PUBLIC CORRUPTION of every kind, whether it affect the Liberty of the Subject, or the Prerogative of the Crown. Both sorts are now grown so numerous and excessive, that the limits of this Discourse will only permit me just to mention a capital instance of each.

Amongst those which affect the liberty of the Subject, is that profligate venality now become universal in the choice of our Representatives to Parliament ; and against which no Laws human or divine hath yet been able to put a check.

Let us once then, for a trial at least, encourage a careful choice of able and honest men ; and support our choice only by honourable and legal methods. But if this fail, and it be found a task too difficult to draw a mercenary People all at once from habitual Prostitution, let us, however, in mere compassion to humanity (the honour of Religion set aside) employ all our interests, in our several stations, to remove the cause, though the guiltless cause, of that pestilential PERJURY, which rages through the Nation on every return of a new Parliament. Reflect, my Brethren, on the dreadful contrast between a *general Thanksgiving* and a *general Election*. A whole People, one year devoting themselves to God ; and the next to the *Mammon of unrighteousness*.

The species of *corruption* which most affects the rights and dues of the Crown, and consequently the operations of Government, may be summed up in partial entries, collusive evasions, and that more daring contempt of Law and Justice, a contraband Traffic. And here, while you are *rendering to God the things that are God's* (and what is more justly his than gratitude for mercies received ?) let me press it on your Consciences, to *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*.

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When you have done this, another duty will remain for your gratitude to discharge; and that is, to join together in support of a virtuous and upright administration, whenever we shall be blessed with it; and till then, to avoid taking party, or fomenting the discords amongst the self-interested Great, by following factious men or factious measures.

These are the slight outlines of that duty we owe our Country; and which we should now think of paying, in discharge of that immense debt of gratitude we owe to our heavenly Protector, too large indeed to be all lavished on this one Object, how ennobled soever, by the late uncommon mercies of Providence.

Another, still more intimate, will claim its share; I mean, our NATIONAL CHURCH, established in the purity of the Gospel; and now become the common Fortress of the Faith.

Nothing but sad experience would suffer us to conceive that a Church of this importance, honoured by its friends, and dreaded by its enemies abroad, should be insulted by Infidels, disturbed and dishonoured by Fanatics; and weakened by the separation of our too scrupulous Brethren, at home.

Our care and concern therefore for its interests will be best seen by our conduct towards all these sort of men.

The first and most insolent enemy of all godliness is the modern UNBELIEVER, who now rears his head and walks openly abroad, under the more creditable appellation of *Freetinker*. He professes himself to be the bane of our *hopes*, in that only solid consolation of humanity, the *prospect of futurity*. Him therefore, and his notions, we should avoid, as *the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day*; but think no more of applying to the Magistrate to curb his insolence, while his only weapon is his wit, than we would solicit a civil edict against a pestilence.

The next enemy of our peace is the PAPIST. As the Unbeliever would shut up all the avenues to future felicity, so the Papist would shut up all but one; and have that in his own keeping, impervious to all who love truth, or have any reverence for common sense.

The Freethinker would cajole us into misery and folly : the Papist would frighten us into it. The chief support of the Pope's tyrannic power was his usurped authority over Kings and Princes ; and the fatal instruments of his rage, were those fanatic assassins still ready addressed to plunge the dagger into the bosom of those whom he has anathematized ; so that the Legislature was necessitated to interpose with what these murderers mis-call *sanguinary Laws* ; the terror of which was not pointed at them as false Believers, but as Traytors and Rebels to their King and Country. And that it might be seen, the necessity was not pretended but real ; and the object of their resentment, bad Citizens, and not mistaken Religionists, they have, from their very first enacting, been chiefly held out in terror ; and never put in force but where the Recusant convict was at the same time a convict Traytor. And since the Bulls of Rome lost their power to frighten the People, or to mischieve the Sovereign, these *sanguinary Laws* have slept so profoundly, that the far greater part both of Protestants and Papists hardly know that any such are in being.

And may *they* sleep ! but let the Guardians of the Law be still awake : for though Time, in its ceaseless revolutions, hath removed this danger from our Country, yet it hath brought in another ; I mean the strong attachment of this sect to a Popish Pretender ; whose absurd, unnatural claim of governing a free People against their wills, can never succeed but by the destruction of those two capital Blessings, *Civil Liberty* and *pure Religion* ; for whose sake (as I have shewn) an unmeriting People hath been taken under the most distinguished protection of Heaven.

A right conduct towards these Disturbers of mankind, a generous People will never be at a loss to understand.—While the Papist forbears to mix in civil factions, and aims at nothing but the liberty of worshipping God in his own way, Protestant Charity will be always ready to connive at an indulgence to him which he will allow to no sect beside ; and which he will not so much as attempt to *deserve*, by giving some reasonable security to the Civil  
Magistrate

Magistrate for his Obedience. But whenever we find the councils of Popery to tend to the disturbance of the State, either by enforcing the wicked claims of a Romish usurpation, or the absurd pretensions of a servile Pensioner of a Romish Court, then the duty of our great Trust requires us to awake the terrors of the Law against them, till we bring them back to the modest measures of a mere religious sect. And we should be the more watchful, as we are not ignorant of their devices; especially that stale trick of assuming every form of disguise; indifferent to them whether it be *infidelity* or *fanaticism*, further than as the prevailing fashion directs them to that which is the likeliest instrument of general mischief.

So far, my Brethren, with regard to these native foes of our happy Constitution.

No less degree of prudence, but much greater of lenity and indulgence, is to be practised towards those who are indeed, or would be thought, its friends.

A new species of Fanaticism has of late arisen within the bosom of the Church, and would fain be thought to belong to it, now known by the fantastic name of METHODISM. These men hold themselves clear of all blame, because they teach only the Doctrines of the established Church. What they say may be true, for aught I know. But it should be considered by those whom this profession may delude, that the *manner of teaching* is often as injurious to truth and peace as the *matter of the Doctrine*; when the heat of zeal raises piety to frenzy; and the leaven of bigotry sinks reason into nonsense.

Now, whether such enthusiastic ideas, as a *sudden and violent new birth—a divinity in our inward feelings—and a miraculous co-operation of the Deity with our outward labours*—Whether these, I say, have not a strong tendency to dishonour and discredit the dignity and sobriety of the *Faith, delivered to the saints*, We however, if they will not, shall do well to consider.

In the mean time, it is our duty, as, on the one hand, to afford no encouragement to these irregularities, by being present in their assemblies, or giving countenance to their Leaders; so on the other, to forbear disturbing or vexing them, by taking advantage of any *legal defects* in their claim to the common rights of *Constitutional toleration*.

But still we should keep a watchful eye over *Fanaticism*; for it is of the nature of all sects founded in it, to be crouching and fawning to a Government vigilant and strong; but whenever it can be taken at advantage, busied on other objects, whether diverted by foreign Enemies, or weakened by domestic Factions, it is, I say, of the nature of such sects, to push the tottering fabric of Government from its basis, down that precipice on which it has been driven by its other adversaries. We have a dreadful illustration of this truth in the Fanatics of the last age, who, on their first appearance, under the name of *Independents*, breathed nothing but peace; and full obedience to civil Power, though rising in professed opposition to the ecclesiastical. Yet public discord no sooner began to rage, than they joined with the most inveterate of the Factions, in the destruction both of Church and State.

I use this example for the extreme aptness of the comparison. For it is to be remembered, that when, in the revolutions of State, the Regicides came to take their turn at the scaffold and the gallows, their Friends took care to collect and publish their last spiritual meditations. Now in these there appears so wonderful a coincidence, both in the ideas and expression, with the journals of our *Methodists*, concerning *beatific visions, divine illuminations, and inward feelings*, that did we not know that the *language of Fanaticism* has, in all ages, been as steady, constant, and unchangeable, as much the same with itself, as the *language of reason* ever was, one might suspect this regicidal collection to be the spiritual breathings of an enlightened Methodist.

Lastly, With regard to our Brethren the Protestant sectaries of more antient date, who from various accidents have long dissented from

from the established worship, and are now secured in their natural Rights by the fundamental Laws of the Constitution, we of the national Church should shew, by all brotherly acts of love and kindness, that the *Toleration* given them by the Laws does, in our sense, add honour to the Gospel, as well as strength and safety to a free Community. More especially should these dispositions be manifested to that founder, and far more considerable part of the Separation, the *Presbyterian*; as well for that these did not spring, like other of the wild sects, from Fanaticism, as because they differ from us rather in the form of *Discipline*, than in the more essential matters of the Christian Faith. As therefore we both profess to be under the same *Shepherd*, we should not, sure, make one another uneasy because we lodge in different *folds*; seeing we both hold, that a time will come when *all shall bear his voice, and there shall be one fold under one Shepherd.*

But now, when we have done all this, a harder task will still remain, the discharge of that duty which we owe to ourselves, as members of that mystical Body, the Church of Christ.—At the Reformation, we professed to regulate that part of it to which we belong, on the purity, and to contain it within the limits, of the GOSPEL. We should therefore discourage, at least by our neglect, all mixture of human Doctrines arising from the vanity of being *wise above what is written.* We should confine ourselves to Gospel-instruction, and be content with what the sacred Word plainly teacheth. This is the only sure barrier to all that bigotry, superstition, and Fanaticism, which have deformed those Sects and Churches, we have been necessitated to drive from us, or from whence we have been driven. The GOSPEL is our Pole-star, of which if we once lose sight, we shall be soon swallowed up in the boundless, unfathomable ocean of *Opinion.*

But then, as we should not *add* to the Gospel, we should be equally careful not to *take from it*, by explaining away (as is the mode) those fundamental Doctrines held out in almost every page, because our line of Reason may be too short to fathom them.

This

This is a short summary of the duties we owe, and which, Gratitude, on this occasion, calls upon us to pay, to our COUNTRY and our RELIGION, the two great sources of human felicity; and, on that account, so wonderfully guarded, as we have seen, by the wakeful eye of Providence.

This should stimulate us to Virtue with redoubled vigour, and give a double horror to the turpitude of Vice: for woe to the unhappy man, who *despiseeth the riches of God's goodness; or knoweth not that this goodness leadeth him to repentance.*

Happy, indeed, is the state of that favoured People, whose return of gratitude for national blessings is perseverance in their virtuous course.

This, it must be owned with sorrow, is far from being our case. But let us not despond. A return to forsaken Virtue is not without its Triumphs; and our holy Religion informs us (what Reason would not dare to intimate) that they are Triumphs of the noblest kind—*I say unto you, that joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.* Amen.

# S E R M O N X.

THE FALL OF SATAN.



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# S E R M O N X.

## T H E F A L L O F S A T A N .

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M A T T. IV. 24. .

AND THEY BROUGHT UNTO HIM ALL SICK PEOPLE, THAT WERE TAKEN WITH DIVERS DISEASES AND TORMENTS, AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND LUNATICS, AND HE HEALED THEM.

**T**HIS is a clear and exact account of the nature of those disorders which found relief from the salutary hand of Jesus.

But we have been told of late, that what is here called, the being *possessed with Devils*, was indeed no other than an atrabilare Lunacy, or one of those *occult distempers*, for which Physicians could not find a *remedy*, or what was harder still, a *name*; and therefore, in complaisance to the imbecillity of their Patients, agreed to deem it supernatural, or, if you please, the work of the Devil.

Of this superstitious fancy (they tell us) Jesus and his Disciples took advantage, in order to impress a religious horror on their followers.

This is boldly said ; and were it as well proved, we should soon see how laudably these men had employed their pains.

In the mean time, as the agency of Satan, recorded in Scripture, is of high importance to illustrate the truth of the Gospel in general, the matter will be well worth a careful inquiry.

But here it may be proper to observe, that my business, at present, is only with Believers. The negative of the Proposition in question was first started by a true Believer ; and has been ever since supported, when it has been supported with sobriety, by men professing the Faith of Jesus. These, as well as we, who adhere to the plain literal sense, go upon one common principle, that the Gospel History is true, and of divine inspiration. What is sought for by both of us, is the true meaning of *Demoniacs*. Nay, we not only go upon one common principle, but profess to pursue one common end, namely, the support of the credibility of Gospel-History. On which account, all that is here urged in favour of the literal sense stands upon the acknowledged truth of Scripture.—In proving the reality of the *Gospel Demoniacs* to Unbelievers, a different sort of argumentation is to be employed. But with professed Unbelievers we have, at present, nothing to do ; unless it be to bespeak their attention to a theologic argument, alone sufficient (amongst a thousand others) to impress upon them a very striking sense of the beauty of this part of God's moral Dispensation.

Now, to form a right judgment of the matter in question, Believers should first of all consider, what part the *Devil* bore in the *Oeconomy of Grace*.

In the history of the *Fall*, to which the writers of the New Testament perpetually allude, *Satan*, or the *Tempter*, the *Calumniator*, or the *Evil-one*, (for by all these names he is designed in Sacred Scripture) is represented as instigating the first Man to disobedience ; for which his punishment by the *second Adam*, who restored man to his lost inheritance, is, at the time of the fall, denounced in the terms of *bruising his head by the seed of the woman*.

When,

When, therefore, this restoration was procured by the death of Christ, we may reasonably expect to find that punishment on the *Tempter*, which was predicted in the history of the *Fall*, recorded in the history of the restoration. And so, indeed, we do; and on many notable occasions. When the Disciples, whom Jesus had sent out, come back exulting in the success of their Ministry, the effect of those supernatural powers with which he had intrusted them, He receives them as Conquerors returning in triumph from their holy warfare.—*I beheld Satan (says he) as lightning fall from Heaven* \*. A strong and lively picture of the sudden precipitation of that *Prince of the Air*, where he had so long held his Empire, and hung like a pestilential meteor over the sons of men.

The *rise of Christ's kingdom*, therefore, and the *fall of Satan's*, being thus carried on together, it would be strange, indeed, could we find in this history no marks of the rage of his expiring Tyranny, amidst all the salutary blessings of the rising Empire of Christ. But we see them in abundance.—We see this enemy of our salvation mad with despair, invoking all the powers of Hell to his assistance, to blast that *peace and good-will towards men*, proclaimed by Angels on the gracious birth-night of the Son of God. For when he understood, from his baffled attempts upon his Lord and Master †, that the *souls* of men had escaped his dominion, he turned the exercise of his cruelty on their *bodies*, in the most humbling circumstances of pain and oppression that could dishonour and disgrace humanity: permitted, no doubt, to range wider at this critical season, than at any time before or since, in order to manifest the Triumphs and Glories of his Conqueror.

Had the *first Adam* stood in the rectitude of his Creation, he had been immortal; and beyond the reach of natural and moral evil. His fall to mortality brought both into the World. The office of the *second Adam* was to restore us to that happy state. But as the *immortality* purchased for us by the Son of God, was not, like that

\* Luke x. 18.

† Luke, chap. iv.

forfeited by Adam, to commence in this world; but is reserved for the reward of the next, both *physical* and *moral evil* were to endure for a season. Yet, to manifest that they were, indeed, to receive their final doom from the REDEEMER, it was but fit that, in the course of his Ministry, he should give a *specimen* of his power over them. One part, therefore, of his Godlike labours was taken up in curing all kinds of *natural diseases*. But had he stopped here, in the midst of his victories over *physical evil*, the proof of his Dominion over both Worlds had remained defective: just as, at the conclusion of his Ministry, the truth of the restoration to *life and immortality* was made manifest by *his own Resurrection*: without which there had been something wanting to the full evidence of this important truth: He was therefore to display his Sovereignty over *moral evil* likewise. And this could not be clearly evinced, as it was, over *natural evil*, but by a sensible victory over SATAN; through whose temptation, *moral evil* was brought into the world; and by whose wiles and malice, it was sustained and increased. Hence it was, that, amongst his amazing works of sanity and salvation, the CASTING OUT OF DEVILS is so much insisted on by the Historians of his life and actions. For He had informed them that this was one of the essential exploits in the erection of his spiritual Kingdom. *If (said he) I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, THEN the Kingdom of God is come unto you* \*.

Thus, from the very genius of the GOSPEL, from the nature and constitution of the system of GRACE, it appears that this was a *real ejection of the Evil Spirit*.

But, besides this, Jesus and his Disciples, in their *manner* of working, and in their *mode* of recording what they worked, did every thing which might best display a real victory over *Satan*.

Let the *Jews* of that time, let the *Diseased* themselves, be as much mistaken as we can suppose them to be, concerning *diabolic possessions*; yet no Believer will presume to say, that *Jesus was*

\* Matt. xii. 28.

*mistaken in his own case*, when he acquainted his Historians with the circumstance of his being *led by the Spirit into the Wilderness, and forty days tempted of the Devil* \*. Whether any, or what part of this transaction passed in *Vision*, is not material to inquire; since the *reality of the agency* is the same, on either supposition; as depending, not on the mode of sensation, but on the certain knowledge of the operation. For Jesus, with all his humility in assuming our nature, was certainly not subject to those infirmities of it, which arise from the delusions of sense; especially in a matter which so essentially concerned his Ministry. If, therefore, there were any mistake in this matter, it must be (I speak it with horror) by the designed contrivance of Jesus himself: and how inconsistent that was with the character of him, who tells us, he was not only the *life*, but the *truth* †, will be shewn hereafter more at large.

So far then is clear, That the *Evil Spirit* was neither absent nor inactive when the Evangelic Mission was first opened.

In the TEMPTATION he was permitted to try whether he could traverse the great work of human Redemption.—In the POSSESSION of the bodies of men, he seems to have been, in part, forced upon the employment; as the *casting him out* by divine power gave glory to God, and bore testimony to the ministry of Christ. Thus, in the case of the *Demoniac*, in the country of the Gadarenes. The Devils oppressed by the mighty hand of Jesus, and ready to be cast out, and sent into a place of torment, confess the power of their Conqueror, and proclaim him to be the PROMISED MESSIAH; at a time when he concealed his Character; and was not certainly known by it, even to his Disciples. If it be asked, *Why they did it?* The answer is easy—To embarrass and impede his Ministry. On this account Jesus checks them, and commands them to be silent. I confess, indeed, that had all the attestation given by Jesus to *real possessors*, been such as his answer to those who said he *cast out devils by Baalzebub*—“that then Baalzebub’s kingdom

\* Luke iv. 1, 2.

† John xiv. 6.

being divided against itself, could not stand"—our conclusion for real Demoniacs would want much of its force, for then he might reasonably be supposed to argue only *ad homines*, which a messenger of God might do, though not strictly conformable to the truth of things. But when a man commands the Devils, whom he pretends to cast out, *not to discover him*, the going such a length, if there were no Devil in the case, is the adventure only of an Impostor. Yet, from our not reflecting that this enemy of mankind, whether he strove to impede, or was forced to promote the progress of the Gospel, was equally in the hands of his Maker, have arisen many of the late unweighed objections to the reality of *demoniacal possessions*.

If we turn from Satan's wily temptation of Jesus, to his cruel treatment of the Jews, we shall find the same strong marks of *real agency*. Be it, that both Jews and Gentiles were very superstitious on this head; and, that they often mistook *natural* disorders for *demoniacal*!—What follows, but that, which we here find provided, against the false conclusions deduced from it? that is to say, greater attention of the sacred Writers in marking those cases of *possession* which Jesus relieved, by some circumstance not equivocal; and what could never accompany an imaginary disorder.

Thus, in the adventure recorded by three of the Evangelists\*; when Jesus had relieved the Demoniac, and his Tormentors had obtained leave to go into a *herd of swine*, What other reason can be given (or indeed what better can be conceived) of this extraordinary request, than that it was to afford a certain mark of distinction between a *real* and an *imaginary possession*? Be it allowed, that the wild creative power of human fancy is able to raise up chimeras that shall affright its owner to distraction. Yet still it must be owned, that Brutes are endowed with no such dangerous faculty: And therefore, when we find great numbers of them, all at once, stimulated to an instantaneous madness, we must needs conclude,

\* Matt. chap. viii. Mark, chap. v. Luke, ch. viii.

that the cause was some superior Agent operating upon their frame.

So admirably hath our indulgent Master been pleased to guard this important truth against the most plausible evasions of self-conceited Men. The strong impulse of a vitiated Imagination, pushed forward by Superstition, might be supposed capable, without any other agency, of producing these very extraordinary appearances. To cut off all escape from a forced confession of the mighty hand of Heaven, here are two cases obtruded on the Incredulous; one, of Satan's *temptation* of the Son of God; another, of his *possession* of brute animals; in neither of which, can the power of the Imagination have any place. In the first, the divine Patient was above its delusions; in the other, the brute as much below it.

If we now proceed, from the *Facts*, which the Evangelists have recorded, to the *Expressions* which they have employed, we shall have further reason to rest satisfied in the common interpretation.

My text says—*And they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments, AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND LUNATICS, and he healed them.* Here we see, that the disorder of those who were said to be *possessed with devils* is precisely distinguished, not only from natural *diseases* and *torments* in general, but likewise from *Lunacy* in particular; that very disorder which the Anti-demonianist is so desirous of confounding with supernatural agitations. Is it possible, therefore, to suppose, that a writer of any meaning, should, at the very time he is distinguishing between *Lunacy* and *possession with Devils*, should, I say, confound them with one another? And yet this is what our Critics make him do; in compliance, they tell us, with an accustomed mode of speech. Is it not plain, on the contrary, that the sacred writer was the more intent to represent them as two different disorders, because they had many symptoms in common: a circumstance which makes our critics as ready to confound them with one another, as the Evangelists were careful to distinguish them.

In

In a word, they who, after all these precautions taken by the sacred Penmen, can think that *Devils* and *Demoniacs* were used in Scripture only as terms of *accommodation* to Jewish prejudices, may well believe (as some of them tell us, they do) that the terms, *Redemption*, *Sacrifice*, and *Satisfaction*, come of no better a house than one of the common figures of Speech.

My serious Readers will be now ready to ask, What learned discoveries they are, which have encouraged these men to innovate from the commonly received opinion concerning the *Gospel-Demoniacs*? Hath any thing been found, in the Scripture-history of them, either absurd in morals, or false in physics? Nothing of either; as may be seen by what hath been just hinted, in the entrance on this discourse.

And yet, whatever the Discoveries are, these men are none of the Discoverers. An excellent Divine of the last age had in his extensive searches into antiquity collected, that both Jews and Gentiles, at and before the time of Christ, were over-run with one common superstition, that Demons, and the Souls of wicked men deceased, frequently seized upon the bodies of the living, and tormented them in various ways. Hence he too hastily, though with his usual modesty, insinuated, that the *Possessions* recorded in the Gospel, might be of that imaginary sort; and no other than *occult diseases*; which, being unmanageable by the Physician, were concluded to be *supernatural*: as if a good Physician could deal with any thing but the Devil: that to these unhappy wretches Jesus applied his salutary hands; and gave to their disorder the fashionable name by which it was at that time distinguished.

Without doubt, this truly learned Divine went the more easily into this bold opinion, as he had observed it to be God's gracious method, in the course of his revealed Dispensations, to take advantage of men's habitual prejudices, to support his truth, and keep his People attached to his Ordinances.

But

But here, the excellent person should have distinguished (as his followers \* were not likely to do it for him) between *Rites* and *Doctrines*. They were the *Rites* only of which God availed himself, for the benefit of his servants, in order to combat or to elude their fondness for Pagan usages. In matters of *Doctrine*, the like compliance could not be indulged to them, without violating material Truths; and therefore Scripture affords us no example of such a condescension. In things only pertaining to *Rites*, we have, indeed, numerous instances. Thus, the use of linen garments, lighted lamps, lustrations, and a multitude of other things in themselves indifferent, were brought from *false* Religions into the *true*: and with high propriety and wisdom, where their new designation sanctified their use, and their use contributed to the better establishment of the Dispensation. On the other hand, to assert and support a false and superstitious opinion (if such it were) concerning *diabolic possessions*, was infecting and contaminating the purity of the Christian Faith.

But if the admirable Author of this groundless novelty did himself miss of so just and obvious a distinction, we have the less reason to wonder that those of his followers, who aimed only at a name by a faint reflexion from the other's learning, should not hit upon what their master had overlooked.

A late eminent Physician, who hath espoused this system, acted a more decent and becoming part. He might pretend, by virtue of his profession, and still more by his skill in it, to a profounder insight into *Nature*: and *Theology* being in another department, he was the less censurable if he did not see all that this divine science opposed to his opinion; an opinion which might be said to descend to him by inheritance from his great name-fake †, and Relation: Whose  
con-

\* Dr. Sykes, Dr. Lardner, &c.

† — Ut redeam autem ad dæmoniacos; non mea est profectio, sed aliorum ante me pietate et doctrina præstantium virorum sententia, quam hic propono. Et proximo quidem sæculo inter nostrates etiam JOSEPHUS MEADUS, theologus rerum sacrarum cog-

conciseness, strength, and modesty of reasoning, he has so well followed, that to confute his objections will be to overthrow the whole system of the anti-demoniac party.

In his *Medica Sacra*, he hath a chapter *de dæmoniis*; in which he hath treated the Evangelic history with all that reverence which becomes a serious Believer and a true Scholar.

The first observation I shall make, on my entrance on his Argument, is general, and will suit all who have written on this side the question. It is this—They reason upon the Case of *Demoniacs*, not as it is recorded by the Evangelists, but as if described only in a treatise of Medicine by Aretæus, Fernelius, or any other of the Faculty; where it stands unconnected with all moral as well as religious ideas. Whereas I have shewn at large that these *demoniacal possessions* have an intimate relation to the doctrine of *Redemption*; and were therefore reasonably to be expected at the promulgation of the Gospel. This sets the matter on quite another footing; and that plausibility which the learned person's representation gives to his arguments entirely disappears, when we put the case as it really was.

1. This necessary caution, against so defective and foreign a representation, being premised, I now proceed to the reasoning itself which the learned Physician employs to discredit the common opinion of *real possessions*. His first argument rises from the extent of the superstition concerning *imaginary ones*. “It had not only infected the Mosaic Religion in particular, but had over-run Paganism in general \*.” “And as to the Jews, who were wont to ascribe whatever there was of prodigious in nature to the ministry

nitione, nulli secundus, luculenta Dissertatione eam propugnavit. Cum ex eadem igitur ac ille familia sibi oriundus, &c. Præf. in Med. Sacr. p. ix. Authore Richardo Mead.

\* — At non Judæis tantum, sed et aliis etiam gentibus in usu fuit insanos pro dæmoniis habere.—p. 76. A Chaldæis quidem ad Phœnices, postea ad Egyptios propagata, ad Græcos deinde, hinc ad Romanos, aliasque demum gentes temporis progressu Dæmoniaca ista Religio pervenit. P. 74.

of ANGELS, they were easily brought to believe, that those dire diseases which infected the mind and body equally, and whose causes were unknown, could be no other than the work of the Devil \*."

Allow all this. Allow that the Jews, at the time of Christ, were very superstitious, yet the learned Doctor, in his turn, must allow that the inspired Teachers of the Gospel were free from an error which so fatally affected the Religion they were intrusted to propagate, as *Demonianism* did, if it were an error. They, therefore, knowingly, gave it countenance and support. But how that will agree with their character and office, we shall see, as we go along.

Our learned writer tells us further, "that the Jews not only gave credit to the works of the Devil, but believed in the *ministry of ANGELS* likewise."—This seems to be one of those slips of the pen to which Truth sometimes exposes those who write most cautiously against her. For, the *Old Testament*, which the learned Doctor reverences equally with the new, bears ample testimony to the *real ministry of Angels*; and with such circumstances as will not admit a caviller to have recourse to vision, figure, or *accommodation*: for if the *Angel* who waylaid Balaam may be reduced to a nocturnal Shadow, those whom Abraham entertained in broad day-light were substantial Beings. When, therefore, the learned person puts the ministry of good and evil Angels on the same footing, he must allow, if the *reality* of the former be proved, that the reality of the latter follows of course.

As to the universality of the superstition, both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, I do not see how that, in the least, alters the case. The Jews of this time, by a more unrestrained commerce with the

\* P. 74. Judæi autem, siquid miri faceret natura, ad ANGELORUM *supremi Dei ministrorum* operam referre soliti, facile in animum sibi inducere poterant, ut diras quasdam crederent ægritudines, quæ mentem simul et corpus læderent, et quarum causas cognoscere nequirent, ab angelorum malorum *hæcymis* exoriri.

Gentiles, had vitiated the purity of their holy Religion, by many doctrines borrowed from the Pagan Philosophers. Thus they took (we will suppose) the *Doctrine of Demons* from Plato; and the *Doctrine of the pre-existence and a future state* from Pythagoras. Nevertheless, it is certain, that both *demoniacal possessions* and a *future state* were equally supported by the acts and predication of Jesus and his Disciples. And this let me observe further, These two doctrines are equally woven (as may appear from what hath been said above) into the substance of the Christian Faith; the doctrines of the FALL and of the REDEMPTION being the two cardinal hinges on which our holy Religion turns. If therefore we can suppose *Demonianism* to be only an old thread-bare fable new dressed; and offered by way of *accommodation* to amuse the Followers of the Gospel; I do not see what can hinder us from supposing, with Synesius, the same of a *future state* likewise. Both doctrines had the advantage of old prejudice in their favour. Yet, if but one were *true* (namely that of a future state) and the other of *Demonianism* only taught by way of *accommodation*, it could proceed only from the difficulty of erasing it from the popular belief. But so uncomfortable a doctrine is erased with very little difficulty.

It may be said perhaps, “that the two Doctrines, which I put upon the same footing of credibility, because the Gospel hath so put them, differ in this, that a *future state* may be proved by natural Reason, which a *Demoniacal possession* cannot.” What doth this Objection infer? No more than this, that a *future state* makes a part of Natural Religion, and *Demoniacal possessions* a part only of the Revealed.

2. The ingenuous Discourser brings another argument against *demoniacal possessions*.—Having collected together all the symptoms of this disorder from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he concludes thus—“All these are the symptoms of a natural distemper. They are more surprizing indeed than those of other disorders, yet  
nothing

nothing supernatural \*.”—His learned Fellow-Collegiate, Dr. JOHN FREIND, treating the same subject, after having given, from *Ætius* and *Oribasius*, a description of the madness called *Lycanthropy*, of which one of the most striking symptoms was, *to wander amongst the sepulchres of the dead*, adds, the *Demoniac in the Scriptures, who was POSSESSED WITH A LIKE SORT OF MADNESS, is represented as having his dwelling amongst the tombs* †.—

THE DETERMINATION of these two learned Naturalists is founded, we see, in this circumstance, “that the symptoms of a demoniacal possession are the same with those in some natural disorders.”—Now if an evil Spirit were permitted to disturb men’s vital functions, whether in the solids, the fluids, or in both, Have we any conception how this could be done, without occasioning some or other of the symptoms which accompany natural diseases? A circumstance, therefore, which must always attend *Demoniacal possessions*, if real, can never, surely, be turned into an argument for the falshood of them.

Let me just observe, that one of the Evangelists being a Physician, he is, by a very becoming partiality, preferred, by Dr. FREIND, to the rest, for the *purity* and *accuracy* of his expression, *when there is occasion to speak of distempers, or the cure of them*; and that he is *more particular in reciting all the miracles of our Saviour in relation to healing, than the other Evangelists are* ‡. Yet St. Luke speaks the very same language concerning *Demoniacal possessions* with the rest. Now, if the Gospel Demoniacs were men only naturally diseased, a Physician, by his deeper inspection into Nature, with the advantage of inspiration to boot, was very likely to have disco-

\* *Infanorum sunt hæc omnia; utrum vero à Dæmoniis, an vi morbi provenerint, disceptatur.*—*Neque enim alius quisquam inter omnes, qui humanum genus infestant, morbus, tam naturæ vim excedere videtur.*—P. 66.

† *History of Physic, Part I. p. 18—21.*

‡ *Ibid. p. 223—225.*

vered it ; and, for the glory of his art, as likely to have undeceived the superstitious vulgar ; these benevolent Practitioners being at all times ready to detect *vulgar errors*. Not to insist, that St. Luke was swayed to this good work by a stronger passion than the honour of his profession as a Physician, it was by the love of truth, as an Evangelist.

The learned author of the *Medica Sacra* then goes on to shew, what he before hinted at, that the *Demoniacs* were affected with no symptoms but what might arise from a diseased body ; which he endeavours to prove from the nature of maniacal disorders \*.

This Observation seems to have arisen from the learned Writer's unwarily confounding Gospel Demonianism with the pretended *possessions* of these later times. We Protestants urge the *testimony of the Gospel* to prove the truth of Demoniacal possessions : the Papists bring the testimony of their *Demoniacs* to prove the truth of the Gospel, or rather of their own Church. In the first case, nothing is wanting to evince the reality of the fact, but the declaration of the great Physician of our souls : in the other, it is necessary to shew that the symptoms accompanying the *possession* were SUPERNATURAL ; such as, speaking in unknown tongues, revealing secrets, foretelling future events, and all those extraordinary appearances which the Writers on Demonology lay down for distinguishing true from pretended *possessions*. So that it appears, this objection hath no force against any but these *Church Demoniacs*.

Having thus seen what these men have to urge against *our* system of the Gospel ; let us now see what we have to urge against *theirs*. Enough hath been said to shew that this is no trifling or unimportant question.

I shall therefore beg leave to lay before you, the consequences which naturally follow the concession, that Jesus and his Disciples

\* P. 66.—Nihil profectò hic sacrum, nihil, quod ex male affecta corporis sanitate oriri non possit, reperimus.

did, in this, only *accommodate* themselves to the fanciful, and therefore (as it concerned Religion) the superstitious opinions of those times, in placing natural distempers in the visionary class of supernatural, and calling real Lunatics, *Dæmoniacs*.

UNBELIEVERS may think (and, by too many, they will be supposed not to think amiss) that they get great advantage over the Evidences of our Faith, by this concession.—While it is believed that evil Demons were subject to the power of Christ from the testimony of the Evangelists, who tell us, that *he cast out Devils and healed those possessed with them*, that plausible subterfuge against his miraculous cures, which supposes the relief afforded to be the effect of a STRONG IMAGINATION, is entirely cut off. For, however the motion of the blood and spirits might be accelerated by the agitations of a mind thus unhinged; the Devil would still keep his hold, and be nowise affected by it. But when once his agency is removed, as a groundless and superstitious terror, these men will think themselves not altogether unable to deal with the miraculous cures of the Gospel on our own principles. They will recount to us the astonishing effects of the Imagination in pregnant women, and in atrabile and melancholy subjects; supported by cases recorded in the writings of Physicians of the greatest authority and credit \*. They will remind us of the cures worked by *Greatrix the Stroker*, in the memory of our Fathers; and of those performed at *the Tomb of Abbé Paris*, in our own. They will tell us of a learned French Physician †, who was so struck with this astonishing force of the human Imagination, that he thought it capable of *working Miracles*, or effecting things supernatural. Nay, they will pretend to account for all this, by the mechanism of the body, unaccountably subject to the delusions of the mind, when unduly agitated either by sensation or reflection. Nor has any one borne a

\* See *Fienus de viribus Imaginationis*.

† Augerius Ferrerius. Of whom Thuanus says,—*Medicinam professus, quam et felicissimè et summo judicio fecit. Hist. Lib. LXXXIX.*

stronger testimony\* to these amazing delusions than the learned person whose objections to the *Gospel Demoniacs* we have just now examined: which may seem the more strange, as the testimony is borne by one who, at the same time, expresses his surprize that Divines should contend so eagerly for this triumph of Christ over Demons, as if something were wanting to demonstrate his power, when exercised only over natural diseases†. Without doubt Divines may contend for it on that principle without being laughed at. And I have written to little purpose if this discourse does not prove that something would have been wanting to demonstrate, if not the power, yet the assumed character of Jesus, had it been exercised only over natural diseases. So that it appeared to me that what they contended for was highly useful; to cut off a subterfuge to which Unbelievers have had recourse, and which this learned

\* Quid mirabilius iis, quæ in Graviditatibus non raro contingere videmus? Fœmina in utero gestans, si forte quid appetiverit, et frustra sit, interdum rei concupitæ figuram quandam, aut similitudinem, in hac aut illa corporis parte, fœtui suo imprimit. Imo, quod majus est, et prodigii instar, subita partis alicujus læsione perterrita matre, ipsa illa pars in infante noxam sentit, et nutrimenti defectu marcescit. Scio hujusmodi omnes historias à medicis nonnullis, quoniam, qui talia fieri possint, haud percipiunt, in dubium vocari. At multa, quæ ipse vidi, exempla mihi hac in re scrupulum omnem ademerunt. Tam stupenda autem est facultatis imaginandi vis, ut non minus falsæ quam veræ imagines afficiant, ubi mens iis assidue sit addicta. Id enim in mulieribus, quæ sæpè dicuntur, usu comperimus, quæ consimili mentis errore captæ, cum Dæmonibus non tantum consuetudinem habere, sed et pacta cum iis se inivisse, sæpè imaginantur; idque animo adeo obstinato, ut etiam in judicium vocatæ, se facinorum quæ nunquam perpetraverint, reas confiteantur, cum ob ea ipsa jam mortis supplicium subituræ sint. Proinde omnibus notum est, quam mirabilibus modis in melancholicis mens perturbatur, &c.—  
P. 70—72.

† P. vii. Præf. Sæpè quidem mirari soleo, cur fidei nostræ Antifites Dæmonas in scenam producere tantopere contendant, quo scilicet-divinum Christi numen de victis hisce infernis hostibus triumphos agat. An divinam Christi virtutem gravissimorum morborum fationes, jussu illius momento temporis peractæ, minus patefaciunt; quam malorum Geniorum ex hominum corporibus expulsionem?—

Physician's

Physician's just account of the *force of the Imagination* contributes to support.—How pertinent the inference may be, which Unbelievers draw from this *force of the Imagination*, it is not my purpose, at present, to inquire. The mischief to Religion is not inconsiderable, that diseased Nature hath afforded these PHILOSOPHERS a handle for any inference at all.

But this is not the worst. There is an unavoidable inference to be drawn from this anti-demoniac system when proved, more fatal to the truth of the Gospel than that other. It is an unquestioned fact, that the Evangelic History of the *Demoniacs* hath given occasion to the most scandalous frauds, and sottish superstitions, throughout almost every age of the Church; the whole trade of Exorcisms, accompanied with all the mummery of frantic and fanatic agitations, having arisen from thence.

Now, were the *Gospel Demoniacs really possessed*, the honour of Religion is safe; and no more affected by these ingrafted frauds and follies of the Church of Rome, than is the Law of Moses by their Inquisitorial Murders, committed under cover of God's penal Statutes against Jewish Idolaters. If men will turn the Truths of God to the support of their crimes and follies; the sacred Oracles will receive no attain from such their malice and perversity.

But were the *Possessions*, recorded in the Gospel, imaginary; and *Demoniacs* only a name for the naturally diseased; and that yet, Jesus and his Apostles, instead of rectifying the People's follies and superstitions on this head, chose rather to inflame them, by assuring certain of the distempered that they were really *possessed by evil Spirits* over whom the name of Christ had power and authority\*: if this, I say, were the case, I should tremble for the consequence: for then would Jesus and his Disciples, who were sent to propagate the TRUTH, appear to be answerable for all the mischief, which the rivetting of this superstition in the minds of men, produced in

\* Matt. xvii. 15.

after-ages: for there is not a clearer conclusion in moral science, than that He, who commits a premeditated fraud, is answerable for the evil which necessarily or naturally proceedeth from it. So little did the learned Physician, with whom we have to do, see into the Casuistry of this question, when he took it for granted, that our contending for the reality of *demoniacal possessions* makes the Gospel, and us, its Ministers who thus interpret it, answerable for all the tricks of the Church of Rome, which rise upon the avowal of it \*.

On the contrary, from what hath been here said, it evidently appears, that the Opinion of the *Accommodators* (who suppose Jesus and his Disciples took advantage of a favourable superstition), and not the Opinion of those Divines who hold Gospel-Demonianism to be real, is the very thing which brings this *opprobrium* on the first Propagators of our holy Faith.

Nor can that reason which is sometimes given for permitting superstitious errors, (although this were, which it is not, of the number of such as might be suffered to hold their course) have any weight in this case; namely, *the difficulty or danger in eradicating them*.

*Danger* there could be none, from the nature of things. For, to remove the false terrors concerning this Enemy of mankind, could never indispose men to embrace their Saviour and Redeemer.

As little *difficult* had it been to eradicate so pernicious an error, how deeply soever rooted in the popular superstition. For when they saw Jesus cure all diseases with a word, and the *pretended*

\* Præf. p. iv. Erroris patrocinio non indiget veritas, uti nec vultus natura nitidus fucum requirit. Et certum est, opinionem istam, quæ jam per multa sæcula invaluit, de potentia ad corpora mentesque humanas vexandas dæmonibus adhuc permessa, variis astutorum hominum præstigiis, cum maximo rei Christianæ damno et *opprobrio* ansam præbuisse. Quis non merito irridet solennes istos Romæ pontificum ritus, quibus exercitantur, ut loqui amant, Dæmoniaci.—Verum istæ præstigiæ, quantumvis oculis et mentibus ignaræ plebis illudant; paulo tamen sagaciores non modo offendunt, sed revera ipsis nocent. Hi enim, dolo perspecto, ad impietatem proni ducuntur.—

*Demoniac* as easily as the rest, nothing could withstand the Authority which informed them of their mistake ; and assured them that this *demonianism*, like the rest, was altogether a natural distemper. On the contrary, many favourable prejudices would soon arise on the side of so authentic an Instructor.

From the whole, therefore, of what hath been here offered in favour of the obvious sense of my Text, the attentive hearer will, I presume, be inclined to acquiesce in the antient interpretation of this part of the Gospel-History ; and be ready to agree with the first Disciples of Christ, in their pious exultation, when they *returned*, from their Mission, *with joy ; saying, Lord, through thy name, even the DEVILS are subject unto us* \*.

\* Luke x. 17.



# DISCOURSE XI.

THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.



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# DISCOURSE XI.

## THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.

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II. Gen. Ep. of ST. PETER, Ch. i. ver. 16—21.

- 16.—WE HAVE NOT FOLLOWED CUNNINGLY-DEvised FABLES, WHEN WE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU THE POWER AND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT WERE EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.
17. FOR HE RECEIVED FROM GOD THE FATHER HONOUR AND GLORY, WHEN THERE CAME SUCH A VOICE TO HIM FROM THE EXCEEDING GLORY, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL-PLEASED.
18. AND THIS VOICE WHICH CAME FROM HEAVEN WE HEARD, WHEN WE WERE WITH HIM IN THE HOLY MOUNT.
19. WE HAVE ALSO A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHERE-UNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS.
20. KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.

21. FOR

21. FOR THE PROPHECY CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

**T**HERE are few places in the New Testament plainer than this; as containing only matter of admonition and instruction: and yet there are none which have occasioned more contest, or greater variety of interpretation\*.

This hath been chiefly owing to a mistake held in common concerning the Apostle's subject; namely, that he is here speaking of the *personal Character* of Jesus; and consequently, that the **MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY**, with which he strengthens his argument, is the prophecies of the Old Testament, establishing that character: Whereas the subject, he is upon, is very different, viz. *the general truth of the Gospel*; and, consequently, the *more sure word of Prophecy* is the Prophecies of the New Testament.

Such a mistake was necessarily productive of another; For if the *personal Character* of Jesus were the subject of the discourse, it would follow, that *the POWER AND COMING of our Lord*—is to be understood of his **FIRST COMING**; and that the *word of Prophecy* refers to a Prophecy already fulfilled. But if here he be speaking of the **SECOND COMING** of Jesus; and that, consequently, the *word of Prophecy* refers to a long series of events to be fulfilled; this puts a fair end to a controversy, supported only by the absurd and embarrassed reasonings of the Controversialists.

1. First then, it is to be observed, that the Epistle from whence the passage in question is taken, is a farewell Epistle to the Churches: The writer *knowing* (as he tells them †) *that shortly he must put off this his Tabernacle*. Now the great topic of consolation urged by

\* See the writings of Bishop Sherlock and Dr. Middleton, and their respective followers, on this subject.

† Chap. i. ver. 14.

these departing Saints to the widowed Churches, was the **SECOND COMING** of their Lord and Master. And of this *coming* it is that St. Peter speaks,—*for we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the POWER AND COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He subjoins the reason of his confidence in this **SECOND COMING**, that he, and the rest of the Disciples, had been *eye-witnesses of the MAJESTY of the FIRST.*

This appears still plainer, from the recapitulation, in the concluding part of the Epistle, where he reproves those *Scoffers of the last days*, who would say, *Where is the promise of his COMING? for since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were* \*. For the primitive Christians had entertained an Opinion †, that the **SECOND COMING** of their Master was at hand. These *Scoffers*, therefore, the Apostle confutes at large, from the fifth to the thirteenth verse of this last Chapter ‡.

If

\* Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4.

† See Div. Leg. vol. III. Book VI. § 6.

‡ But not only the general subject of the Epistle, but the expression used in the text, shews, that this *power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* is to be understood of his **SECOND COMING**—*for we have not followed* (says he) **CUNNINGLY-DEvised FABLES**, *when we made known unto you the power and coming, &c.* Now a simple attestation of a *voice from Heaven* at his **FIRST COMING**, could with no propriety of speech be called a *cunningly-devised fable*. But let us suppose the Apostle to speak of Christ's **SECOND COMING**, when, according to the **PROMISE**, there was to be a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein was to dwell righteousness, after the old had been burnt up and destroyed by fervent heat §; and then, if the prediction of this awful scene were an invention, it was truly characterized by a **CUNNINGLY-DEvised FABLE**, such as those in which Paganism abounded; where, in their **MYTHOLOGIC** stories, they speak of the Regions of departed heroes, &c.

——— “Locos lætos & amœna vireta

“Fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.

“Lagior hic campos æther & lumine vestit

“Purpureo: solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.

§ Chap. iii. ver. 12, 13. compared with the description in the xxi. and xxii. chapters of the Apocalypse.

If this account of the Epistle be true, then, by the **MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY** must needs be meant, not *Prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled*; but a long series of *Prophecies to be fulfilled under the New*, each in its order, and extending through a course of many Ages. To these, the Churches are bid *to take heed*, as to a *more sure word*; which the Apostle compares *unto a light that shineth IN A DARK PLACE, until the day dawn, and the day-star should arise in their hearts*.

From *Prophecy*, thus circumstanced, we see, it could not be a Prophecy of the Old Testament fulfilled, such as that of Isaiah \*; which a late critic † supposes to be the thing here meant; but a Prophecy of the New, because this Prophecy was not *a light shining in a dark place*, but in the *day*, and a day far advanced; yet the Apostle supposes the *darkness* to prevail all round the *light* he speaks of, and the *dawn* to be at a great distance.

But then, on the other hand, neither could it be a Prophecy of things altogether future, since such Prophecies are totally *dark* and unintelligible: yet this is a *light*, although a *light shining in a dark place*.

But, if neither one nor the other, What is it then? To understand this, we must reflect upon the general subject of the *farewel* Epistle. It contains directions for their practice, and consolations to their Faith. Accordingly, having planned out the whole edifice of Christian Faith and Morals in that famous summary delivered in the fifth, sixth, and seventh verses of this Chapter; and recommended it by a variety of exhortations and encouragements, he supports himself in all he had

And to ascertain his meaning, the Apostle uses a phrase, by which only the *mythologic* theology of Paganism can be designed,—*not following or imitating the cunningly devised fables of the Greek sophists and mythologists* ‡.

\* Chap. xlii. ver. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles.*

† Mr. Markland.

‡ Οὐ γὰρ σισοφισμῶν; ΜΥΘΟΙΣ ἱκανοποιεσθῆναι; ———

said,

said, by the noble consciousness of not having *followed cunningly-devised fables*, when, for their consolation, he had said so much of the **SECOND coming** of their Lord and Saviour; of which he could with the greater confidence speak, as he was an eye-witness of the *miraculous* circumstances which ushered in the **FIRST**, when Jesus *received from God the Father honour and glory*, in the *voice* from Heaven at his baptism \* and on the mount †. “But besides these *miracles* attendant on his **FIRST coming**, which give credit to the truth of what he said concerning his **SECOND**, *we have* (says he) a still further confirmation, **IN THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.**”

Thus he proves invincibly, that nothing was wanting to satisfy men in this important point. It had all the evidence of **MIRACLES** and **PROPHECY**, the two great supports of Revelation; and graciously given to establish our faith in the Divine Author of it.

The ground of this extreme goodness is apparent. In the first promulgation of a revealed Religion, there is a necessity for the attestation of **MIRACLES**, because nothing but the seal of that testimony can assure us that it came from God. But when once this end is served, *Miracles* are withdrawn from his Church. It hath, from thence-forth, only the *traditional* verification of the Evidence of a past Fact; Evidence, in its nature, much weaker than the original Record; of which the first Ages of the Church were in possession.

Our gracious Lord, therefore, who *never leaves himself without a Witness*, in the *moral* government of the world, any more than in the *physical*, hath been pleased to give to these latter ages, an equivalent for the **MIRACLES** of the former, in an evidence for the truth of Revelation as strong and irresistible: I mean, **PROPHECY**; by bestowing its virtue upon his chosen Servants (such as St. PAUL and St. JOHN). Who now more simply, now more enigmatically, predicted the future fortunes of the Church, throughout its seve-

\* Matth. chap. iii. ver. 17.

† Chap. xvii. ver. 5.

ral stages; which, as they became accomplished and fulfilled, would, in the strongest manner, confirm the Faithful of every age, in the belief of the divine original of the Gospel.

That this gracious indulgence to the well-being of the Church was constant, and for the support of *Revelation in general*, is seen more fully in the Jewish Oeconomy; where, though MIRACLES, by reason of the peculiar Form of that Dispensation, necessarily accompanied it through a course of many ages, that is, during all the time the Jews were under an *extraordinary Providence*; yet as *Miracles*, together with that extraordinary Providence, were to cease long before the dissolution of the *Theocracy*, their holy Prophets, and DANIEL more circumstantially and minutely than the rest, foretold the various fortune of that Republic, from his own time to the end, in order to afford the later Jews, as those Prophecies kept fulfilling, the clearest evidence of the truth of their Religion. Such was the gracious provision of Providence in support of revealed Religion\*.

St. Peter's reasoning therefore stands thus, in this important passage of his Epistle—that you may be assured, (says he), *we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power of our Lord at his second coming*, it is well known that we *were eye-witnesses of the majesty of his first coming*, when a voice from Heaven confirmed his mission and ministry. But this is not the whole, we have a *more sure word of Prophecy* which gives still further credit to what we taught you concerning this matter. So you have the double security of *Miracles* and *Prophecies* for this truth in particular, which God had been pleased to give for the Faith in general.—*Miracles*, says he, was not all, nor indeed the principal. *We have A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.*—The

\* In a former part of these Discourses, I have treated of the necessity of the Evidence both of Miracles and Prophecies in conjunction, for another purpose, namely, the establishment of the MESSIAH-CHARACTER: Here, I am upon the expediency of both separately, and in different periods, for the support of REVEALED RELIGION in general.

terms *more sure*, in the translation, are a little equivocal, and may signify either an evidence which may be *more surely relied on*, or an evidence which *preserves its entire force much longer*; and this latter is the sense of the Original, *βεβαιότερον*, *more firm, constant, and durable*, which (as we have shewn) is the nature of *Prophecy fulfilled*, when compared with the *traditional* evidence of *miracles*. In these, we depend on the good faith of others; in those, we rely on our own senses: For the Apostle's observation respects not the evidence which he and his friends had of the truth of the Gospel, from *instant* miracles; but that evidence which rises on *traditional*, as it abides in the Church. So that here is no comparison between St. Peter's sensible knowledge of the *miracle in the mount* in particular, and of the *word of prophecy* in general. But just the contrary; between the *traditional* evidence of miracles in general, and of the prophecies of the future fortunes of the Church in particular. This is the direct aim and tendency of the Apostle's argument; which some late theological refinements and antitheological prejudices have concurred to render infinitely obscure and intricate, though, in itself, as clear as it is rational.

This being premised, we come directly to the question—What *Prophecy* it is, which the Apostle calls a *more sure word*—a *light shining in a dark place*, &c. a Prophecy, which though it were to receive its *full* evidence in a future age, yet as then beginning to operate, deserved the most serious attention of the faithful, in that wherein the Epistle was written:—*whereunto* (says he) *ye do well that you take heed?*

To which I answer—The description can agree with nothing but the predictions of St. Paul and St. John, concerning ANTICHRIST: For those of St. Paul (and probably the other \* of St. John) had been published before the writing of this Epistle; for St. Peter recurring

\* See, concerning the *Apocalypse*, Sir I. Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, &c. p. 235—246.

again,

again, towards the conclusion \* of his Epistle, as the subject of it required, to that *more sure word of Prophecy* mentioned in the beginning, refers evidently to those parts of St. Paul's writings, where the Prophecies in the *Revelations* concerning ANTICHRIST are summarily abridged; of which Peter gives this character—*As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things, hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all other Scriptures, unto their own destruction* †. In which words, we have the truest picture of those indiscreet Interpreters, who set up for Prophets, in explaining prophetic events yet unaccomplished; instead of confining themselves to the illustration of those Prophecies that are already fulfilled.

Now this Book of the *Revelations*, containing Predictions darkly and enigmatically delivered, hath yet such strong marks of the Divinity about it, as may well justify St. Peter's character concerning it, of *a light shining in a dark place*; while his direction *to take heed* to it, and to contemplate the subject-matter of it, bespeaks his charitable attention to the pastoral care. For several of the Prophecies having already had their completion, even in those early times, frequent attention to this *light* was useful, to confirm their Faith in the past, and to support their Hopes in the future.

The principal subject of this famous Book relating to one great Event—*The future fortunes of the Church, under the usurpation of THE MAN OF SIN*, is elegantly called, by way of eminence, the WORD OF PROPHECY. It began fulfilling even before Peter wrote this Epistle; for St. Paul, speaking of the MAN OF SIN, to the Thessalonians, says, *the Mystery of iniquity doth already work* ‡. It is therefore, with the greatest truth as well as strength of Colouring, called A LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE. Just so much was seen of the busy *mystery of iniquity*, now beginning to work, as was sufficient to fix men's attention, and to put them on their guard against its delusions.

\* Chap. iii. ver. 15.

† Ver. 16.

‡ Second Epistle, chap. ii. ver. 7.

The Apostle too, for the further encouragement of those whom he exhorts to give early attention to this ray of *light*, adds that a time would come when the surrounding *darkness* should be dispersed, and *Day* pour in upon the present obscurities in this word of PROPHECY: on which, in the mean time, they were patiently to wait—UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR SHOULD ARISE. This long wish'd-for *Day* at length appeared, with REFORMATION on its wings: A Blessing, which redeemed Reason and Religion from the harpy-claws of Monkish Ignorance and Superstition.—The restoration of abused Science, which accompanied it, is well described by the *Day dawning*; as the defecation of polluted Religion is by the *Day-star rising in their hearts*.

At this important *Æra*, the great *Mystery of Iniquity* was clearly revealed; *Antichrist* was fully laid open and exposed; and such Evidence given by *Prophecy* to the truth of the Christian Faith, as must, while Reason remains amongst men, strike conviction on the *hearts* of the unprejudiced. For what but the Spirit of God was sufficient to foretell the Usurpation of an Antichristian Tyranny, which was to arise many ages after, within the Church of Christ itself; a species of blasphemous Dominion, which the world had never seen before, and of which, not the least conception could be formed either from example, similitude, or analogy. But the Apostle foreseeing that when this flood of *light* should break in upon a long-benighted world, the imagination would be, now, as apt to extravagate, as before, when it was bewildered amidst the surrounding darkness, He thought proper to add this important caution—*Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*; i. e. “When you sit down to study the Apocalypse, let it ever be under the guidance of this great Truth, That it is not in the department of man to interpret unfulfilled Prophecies, by pretending to fix the natures and seasons of Events, clearly indeed predicted, but obscurely described. For that the Interpreter of Prophecy is not Man, but God; who, by bringing events to pass, affords to Man the only true interpretation.”

That

That this is the meaning of the Apostle's words, so long wrested to absurd and licentious purposes, is evident from the reason he assigns of his caution—*for the Prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* : i. e. “ for Prophecy, under the old Law, was not the effect of human conceit, but of divine influence.” Therefore both the *prediction*, and the *interpretation*, which is the *accomplishment* of the prediction, are equally the word and work of God, and become manifest in the course of his Providence.—Nor did the Prophets themselves always understand the full or even the true import of what they delivered, being only the Organs of the Holy Spirit. Much less then can we suppose the common Ministers of the word to be qualified for the office of Interpreters of unfulfilled Prophecies.” How necessary it was to give this caution, appears from what he himself observes in this very Epistle, of certain *unlearned* and *unstable* men who *wrested those hard places* in St. Paul, where the *man of sin* is mentioned, to their own destruction \*.

This dangerous ABUSE, which began so early, and lasted so long, hath infected every age of the Church ; especially these LATTER TIMES ; when the wonderful accomplishment of several of the Prophecies concerning *Antichrist*, having set Divines upon a more accurate study of the *Apocalypse*, the men of warmer imaginations, forgetting this apostolic caution, instead of confining their contemplations to the Prophecies already fulfilled, for the support of their Faith, and the consolation of their Hopes, have erected themselves into PROPHETS ; and, taking the work out of the hands of Providence, have dared to predict of what is yet in the womb of Time, and still remains in a dark place.

But how extravagant soever some Protestant Interpreters have been, when they gave a loose to their Imaginations, yet the soberest of them have universally concurred with the wildest, that this *man of sin*, this *Antichrist*, could be no other than the Man who fills the PAPAL CHAIR : Whose usurpation in Christ's Kingdom, and

\* Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4.

Tyranny over Conscience, by *intoxicating the Kings of the earth with the cup of his enchantments*, and Himself *with the blood of the saints*, so eminently distinguishes Him from all other unjust Powers, that the various Churches who broke loose from his *Enchantments*, agreed in supporting the vindication of their Liberty, on this common Principle, that the POPE or CHURCH OF ROME WAS THE VERY ANTICHRIST FORETOLD.

On this, was the REFORMATION begun and carried on: On this, was the great SEPARATION from the Church of Rome conceived and perfected: For, though *Persecution for Opinion* would acquit those of schism, whom the Church of Rome had driven from her Communion; yet, on the principle that She is *Antichrist*, they had not only a right, but lay under the obligation of a command, *to come out of this spiritual Babylon* \*.

On this Principle (the common ground, as we say, of Reformation) the several Protestant Churches, how different soever in their various models, were all erected: though, in course of time, some of the less stable have slipped beside their foundation, and now stand assant from the common building. For as the zeal of the Reformed kept abating, the Principle came to be deserted; and at length laughed-at as the fancy of brain-sick visionaries.

Therefore, before we proceed to the vindication of this important Truth, it may be proper to inquire into the chief causes of so general a Desertion—I mean, as it is now seen amongst ourselves.

## II.

The first occasion of discredit began very early. Some of the first Reformers, even in the days of ELIZABETH, suffered themselves to entertain scruples concerning the further use of whatever, in the *Roman Ritual*, had been abused to superstition. These scruples were fostered by the Mosaic Law, ill understood: in which, what-

\* Rev. chap. xviii. ver. 4.

ever had been abused to Idolatry, was (as they conceived) condemned and defecrated. Now the force of this analogy (such as it had) arose from the Principle, that **THE POPE WAS ANTICHRIST**, and the **CHURCH OF ROME THE SPIRITUAL BABYLON**: from whence the *People of Christ* being commanded to come out, as the *People of God* had been, from Egypt, it seemed congruous to reason that **PAPAL** and **EGYPTIAN** Rites were equally abhorred by the God of purity.

I will not stay at present, as it is a matter foreign to the subject, to discriminate the natures of the **TWO DISPENSATIONS**, by which the folly of applying the Laws of One to the administration of the Other, might be made apparent.

It is more to the purpose to observe, that these scrupulous men (from thenceforth called **PURITANS**) by their obstinacy, which ended in a *Separation*, soon grew very troublesome, and even formidable to Government. And **ANTICHRIST**, and the **WHORE OF BABYLON**, being now become the watchword, as well on account of its being the general ground of *Reformation*, as because they deemed it the particular support of their *Puritanism*; it is not at all strange, that what, till now, had been a *common Principle*, should, from henceforth, be considered by the Established Church, in no other light than the *support* of separation, and the *badge* of separatists. But, as a *support*, those who were most attached to the national worship would be forward to bring the Principle into discredit; and as the *badge*, they would be ashamed to have it appear upon themselves.

The reign of **JAMES** the First gave another and more decisive stroke to the unfashionable doctrine of *Antichrist*. He abhorred the **PURITANS**, against whom Elizabeth was contented to be only on her guard; and he feared the **PAPISTS**, whom Elizabeth set at defiance; so that to countenance the doctrine of *Antichrist*, was, in his opinion, to give credit to the Puritan, whom he hated, and to make the Papists desperate, whom he feared. The Court-Divines, therefore, sought his favour, by speaking slightly of the doctrine;

doctrine; or by treating it with contempt. And the greatest Divine \* and Scholar of that age ruined his fortune at Court by an immortal work in defence of this *common Principle*. Nor does James's writing a *Paraphrase on the Revelations*, before he was twenty, to prove the *Pope* to be *Antichrist*, or the cutting some lively jokes on the old Gentleman in his more advanced age, at all shew that his sentiments were different from those I have here given to him; for the *Paraphrase* was apparently the composition of his Puritan Governors; and as for his Jokes, he would at any time sacrifice a *Friend* to their good reception.

But there was another cause of still more weight, which, at this time, concurred to discredit the *doctrine of Antichrist*: and that was the effects of the persecutions which the Puritans, at that time, underwent. For, religious Persecution hardens and contracts the Will, and inflates and inflames the Imagination; so that the Puritans, supported under their oppression, by *stubbornness* and *enthusiasm*, soon began to fancy that they saw the evils they suffered, foretold in their favourite Prophecies concerning *Antichrist*: which set them upon interpreting the *Apocalypse*, not so much to illustrate, by the aid of critical learning, what was past, as to teach, with the air and spirit of Prophets, what was to come: regardless of the sage information of the Apostle, that the unfulfilled Prophecies *are not of private interpretation*. It will be easily believed, what wild work this spirit must produce in minds thus agitated, when brooding over so mysterious a Book: In which, amongst their other visionary discoveries, they saw all that concerned their own cause and sufferings, together with the happy issue of them, in the glorious triumphs of the Saints: And it will be as easily conceived, what dishonour these extravagances must bring upon the great PRINCIPLE itself. The Court, and Comic, Poets, who are generally the Pensioners or Creatures of the Great, soon took up the subject; and having it at this advantage, turned these Prophecies and their Interpreters, into mockery and ridicule. From thence, the People

\* Mede.

caught the infection; and *Antichrist* and *Fanaticism* have been ever since synonymous terms.

LAUD (who was bred up in College with an aversion to the Puritans) when under CHARLES THE FIRST he soon became all powerful, encouraged the more rational principles of the *Arminians*; of which sect GROTIUS and EPISCOPIUS were the two main Pillars. Now the moderation of the One, and a visionary scheme of the Other, indisposed both from pressing Popery with the victorious doctrine of *Antichrist*. This, which added fresh discredit to it, encouraged one Court-Divine \* (afterwards an Archbishop) in an Act at Oxford, to deny publicly, that the *Pope was Antichrist*; while another of the same fashionable party, though much more able and discreet †, ventured, in pure aversion to Fanaticism, to adopt the System of GROTIUS on this head; a System, to which Popery has been much indebted; and which GROTIUS seems to have invented for the sake only of his darling Project, an Union between the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

The Civil Wars, and the overthrow of the Constitution, soon followed, the glorious achievement of a rabble of armed Fanatics! whose Enthusiasm was inflamed to its height, by their second project, to destroy *Antichrist*, and erect *the fifth Monarchy of King Jesus*. Indeed, these were no other than the various spawn of the first persecuted *Puritans*. So that when Monarchy was restored, and Churchmen of greatest merit were, by a rare chance, become most in repute at Court, the severity of their sufferings in the late confusions, and their aversion to the fanatic spirit that occasioned those sufferings, enough disposed them to follow the example of the old Court Clergy, in discountenancing a Doctrine whose abuse had so much contributed to aggravate the preceding mischiefs.

The licentious practices and the Popish projects of the Favorites and Ministers of CHARLES THE SECOND further concurred to bring this GREAT PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE into discredit: Amongst these, whatever concerned the sublimities of Religion, and the

\* Sheldon.

† Hammond.

mysterious ways of Providence; whatever disgraced the Church of Rome, or stigmatized her with the brand of ANTICHRIST, was sure to be treated with contempt and aversion.

The REVOLUTION, indeed, removed many of these prejudices; and, by the vindication of *religious* as well as *civil* Liberty, abated the rancour of Sects and Parties against one another. Nay, by the recent terror and abhorrence of Popery, from which men were but just recovered, it even produced contrary prejudices, favourable to the cause of truth. So that now one would have hoped, this capital *Prophecy* might at length have procured a fair and equitable hearing. But, alas! the remedy came too late: The distemper was grown inveterate, and ANTICHRIST and BABYLON were still held to be the language of cant and enthusiasm. So that no eminence of genius, no depth of Science, could secure the Writers on *this Prophecy* from contempt. Of this we have lately had a portentous instance, respecting the most sublime mind \* that ever was; and in whose amazing efforts this nation most justly prides itself: who was no sooner known to have commented on the REVELATIONS, than he was judged † to have fallen into dotage. And this great Expofitor, as great when he laid open the mysteries of the *Religious* System, as when he unveiled those of the *Natural*, was almost generally condemned to neglect and oblivion.

### III.

Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, under which the man must labour who comes to the defence of this SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, yet a full sense of the importance of the case will be sufficient to encourage a Protestant Divine to make the attempt: For, on the Prophecy concerning *Antichrist* the Protestant Churches were founded; and by the APOCALYPSE in general are they im pregnably upheld.

\* NEWTON.

† By Voltaire and the French Philosophers; a sect sprung from our Freethinkers.

The contempt, in which the Doctrine now lies, hath kept in credit the miserable shifts the Church of Rome hath employed to cure the *deadly wound* which cannot be *healed*. For as that Community hold the *Apocalypse* to be Canonical, they are obliged to own, that the object of the Prophecy is *Antichrist*, or the *Man of sin*; and, what is more, that it is in ROME itself where he domineers. For, the place of his residence, the City on the *seven hills*, is so plainly marked out, that it can be neither mistaken nor denied.

This is hard upon them, as it lays them under the necessity of going back as high as the first PERSECUTING EMPERORS, that is, to the first Ages of the Church, to seek for this *Man of sin*; and in the circumstances of the rage and impiety of those Tyrants, and in the state of the then suffering Church, to find out all that relates to the *Antichristian Power* foretold.

The difference of opinion, therefore, between the Romish and Protestant Churches, on this important point, stands thus:—The *Romanists* hold that this ANTICHRISTIAN POWER is a power of the CIVIL kind; the Reformed contend that it is a power ECCLESIASTICAL. While both concur to fix the *seat* of this Power, whose nature is thus disputed, in the CITY OF ROME.

This long Contest may therefore be well reduced to a single question, a question which leads to a decisive issue, “Is THIS ANTICHRISTIAN POWER OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL, OR IS IT OF THE CIVIL KIND?—If it be a *civil power*, the Church of Rome gains her cause, and clears herself of the capital charge of the *Man of sin’s* sitting in the chair of PETER, and usurping in the *Kingdom of Christ*. If the *power be ecclesiastical*, the Protestant Churches triumph, as being established on *Prophecy*, and having their secession and separation justified \* by the command of the Holy Spirit.

To determine this decisive question, we shall have no occasion to lanch out into that wide ocean of Literature, agitated by a thousand storms, arising from every controversial quarter of this unexplored

\* Rev. chap. xviii. ver. 4.

world of MYSTICAL PROPHECY. For, if the Power foretold be of the *civil* kind, it can relate only to the persecuting EMPERORS; if it be a Power *ecclesiastic*, it can relate only to persecuting POPES. For it is agreed on all hands, that PERSECUTION is the BADGE OF ANTICHRIST.

But before I proceed more directly to shew that the *Pope*, and not the *Emperor*, is interested in the actions and fortunes of this MAN OF SIN, it will give additional force to the Evidence, if we reflect, previously, on the distress to which, both matters of *fact* and matters of *right* have reduced the Advocates of the Papal Cause.

To evade the edge of these Prophecies, which cut so deep into the vitals of the Church of Rome, her Advocates did not want dexterity, when they interpreted *Antichrist* to be a Power of the *civil* kind. This took the burthen from off their shoulders, by removing the whole Scene into an opposite quarter; a quarter fertile of plausible applications. Their dexterity consisted in turning necessity into a shew of choice. For the birth of *Antichrist*, his acts and achievements, being confined to one particular City; in order to find a *Civil Power* domineering in this City, and persecuting the Church of Christ, they were obliged to force their way upwards, to the first Ages of Christianity. But, how much this makes their Cause to labour, we shall now endeavour to evince.

1. First then, had *Antichrist* or the *man of sin* been the persecuting Roman Emperors, the Christians of that time must needs have seen and acknowledged his Character, in the working and the accomplishment of the Prophecy: They, who were Contemporaries, and, of course, perfectly well acquainted with every circumstance respecting the *Persecutors*, and every circumstance attending the *Persecution*, could not but see how all of them (if such were the fact) quadrated with every part of the *Prediction*; and so have been fully convinced, that the *Man of sin* was the *Emperor of the world*; as indeed he was not likely to be one in a much lower Station. On the contrary, though PERSECUTION be the family-badge of *Antichrist*,  
yet

yet the Christians of that time saw nothing in the *imperial edicts*, or in their execution, that had any marked resemblance to the desolations to be committed by *the man of sin*. They saw nothing there even to excite their attention, or to erect their minds towards the Crimes or towards the Punishment of the *man of sin*, so graphically described by the apostles Paul and John: nor, indeed, any other circumstance in their then state of oppression, sufficient to rescue the *Apocalypse* from a total neglect, save in the doubts they entertained of its authenticity. So that, if the *Prophecy of Antichrist* concerned the *early* fortunes of the Christian Church, as our Adversaries pretend; and that, yet, the Church, most concerned, saw nothing of it, as was the case; Unbelievers will say, that no greater disgrace can befall PROPHECY than what these two things, when laid together, will occasion.

2. Again, it is to be observed, that the information concerning *Antichrist*, or the *Man of sin*, was not intrusted to St. John alone. It was communicated to other of the Apostles; perhaps to all, for reasons we may easily collect; certainly, to the *great Apostle of the Gentiles*. Now St. Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, combating a growing error then risen in the Church, “that the SECOND COMING of our Lord was at hand,” says, *Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that MAN OF SIN be FIRST revealed, the son of Perdition* \*. This is no obscure intimation that the reign of ANTI-CHRIST was at some considerable distance. But the words which follow put the matter out of doubt: *Remember ye not (says he) that when I was with you, I told you these things? and now ye know WHAT WITHHOLDETH that HE might be revealed in his time. For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY doth already work: only HE, who now letteth, will lett, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that WICKED ONE be revealed* †.

\* Chap. ii. ver. 3.

† Ver. 5, 6, 7.

By this, it appears, that the impediment, or *lett*, to the revelation of *Antichrist* was something *external*.—That spirit of Pride, persecution, and impiety, which makes up the Character of the MAN OF SIN, was already breeding and fostering in the Church; and were it not for an impediment *without*, which would take some time to remove, his appearance might have been soon expected. This impediment, we see, St. Paul scruples to lay open by Letter; at the same time, he reminds them, that, in his Conversations with them, he had explained the secret. But surely, when his argument led him to it, he had small cause to decline a repetition, unless he thought it dangerous to be put in writing. Such a reserve was not his wont. On other occasions of precept and instruction, he inculcated what he would impress upon their minds, by frequent remonstrances and repetitions, *in season and out of season*. We must conclude, therefore, that something of great importance occasioned his reserve. And if this *lett* to the appearance of *Antichrist* were the present EXISTENCE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, we are not to wonder he should scruple to commit so dangerous a secret, to paper; He who, on all occasions, was so cautious not to give offence to the *civil Power*. And what would have been deemed so high a crime of State against IMMORTAL ROME, as to teach that her Dominion was to pass away; and, as an obstruction to the eternal Decrees of Providence, to give place to a Power still more tyrannical and unjust?

Now, as the *Papal usurpation* arose out of the Ruins of the *Roman Empire*, and could have arisen, naturally, by no other means, we have great reason to believe, that the EXISTENCE of this EMPIRE was the very *lett* and impediment so obscurely intimated by the prudent Apostle.

However, he tells us, that the secret had been communicated to the Churches. And probably it was one amongst the chief of those dangerous informations, which, we learn from the history of the Primitive Church, were kept, with all care, from the knowledge of the Catechumens.

What then would such a communication to the Church produce, but what it did produce, a general Opinion, that the appearance of *Antichrist* was to be in the *latter times*? The Apostle, we find, when he combated the common error, that our Lord's *second coming* was at hand, employs this general opinion concerning *Antichrist*, to shew how much they were mistaken, by an argument to this purpose, "You acknowledge that *Antichrist* is to appear in the *latter times*; now this *Man of sin* must be revealed before the *second coming*; consequently the *second coming* must needs be far off."

The *late appearance of Antichrist* was a doctrine so universally received in the primitive Church, that it was like a proverbial saying amongst them; and from thence, St. John takes occasion to MORALIZE on the Doctrine, and warn his followers against that spirit which, in after-times, was to animate the *Man of sin*.—"Little children" says he, "it is the *last time*: and ye have heard that *Antichrist* shall come: even now there are many *Antichrists*; whereby ye know that it is the *last time* \*." As much as to say, We are fallen into the very dregs of time, as appears from that *Antichristian* spirit which now so much pollutes the Churches: for you know, it is a common saying, that *Antichrist is to come in those wretched days*." The Apostle goes on to employ the same allusion through the rest of the Epistle.—*He is ANTICHRIST that denieth the Father and the Son* †.—Again—*This is that spirit of ANTI-CHRIST, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world* ‡.—And again—*Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a Deceiver and AN ANTICHRIST* §. Where, we see, the Appellation, *Antichrist*, is employed to signify *an enemy of God and godliness in general*, by the same figure of speech that *Elias* was designed in those times to signify a Prophet; and *Rachel*, a Daughter of Israel; and that, in these times, *Judas* is used for a Traitor,

\* 1 Epist. John, chap. ii. ver. 18.

† Ver. 22. . ‡ Chap. iv. ver. 3.

§ 2 Epist. ver. 7.

and *Nero* for a Tyrant. But as these converted terms necessarily suppose, that they originally belonged to persons of the like Characters, who had them in *proper*; so does the name *Antichrist*, transferred by St. John, to certain of his impious Contemporaries, as necessarily suppose, that there was one who should arise in the latter times, to whom the *title* eminently belonged, as marked out in the Prophecies by the *proper name* of ANTICHRIST.

This was not amiss to observe, because the Advocates of the See of Rome have laid hold of these passages to shew, that ANTICHRIST was only a *generic term* for every enemy of God and godliness: Whereas we Protestants insist, that it was the *Proper name* of one Grand Impostor; not *one* by the individuality of *Person*, but by the identity of *Station*, to be revealed in the latter Ages of the Church; and, after he had been foretold by name, that was applied *generically*, by the commonest figure of speech, to all who had any semblance to his Character. The only difference is, that Prophecy enabled the sacred Writers to use the generic appellation, before the appearance of him who had it for his patronymic; whereas, in the other cases, the generic term must needs come after the Person who first bore it for his own name.

From these places therefore of St. Paul and St. John it necessarily follows, that the ANTICHRIST or MAN OF SIN predicted by Both of them (his *Person* and *Fortunes*, more fully by the latter; his *Merchandize* and *Traffic*, more minutely by the former) could not be the persecuting Emperors.

Another very persuasive argument, that the Antichristian Power in question is the growth of these latter times, is the mysterious darkness in which the enigmatic prophecies in the Apocalypse concerning ANTICHRIST lay involved for many ages. *A light* indeed *shining in a dark place*, to the few sagacious observers of every age, but surrounded with so thick a darkness to all besides, that, despairing to penetrate the gloom, they consigned the *Apocalypse* to a general neglect, not without much uncertainty and doubt concerning its Author. But these *latter times* have seen the clouds and

darkness gradually fly off, and the *light* grow stronger and brighter as the fate of ANTICHRIST approaches. This seems to be a sure evidence, that the grand Impostor is of these times; that he has advanced through several stages of his Usurpation; that two or three Ages ago his power was at the height; that he is now past his meridian, and hastening to his decline; and that some future Age, not very remote, will see his total destruction; and consequently the remaining obscurity of this famous book made manifest to all \*.

A third

\* A late Protestant Editor and Commentator of the NEW TESTAMENT, in reverence perhaps to the memory of Grotius, one of the brightest Ornaments of the Church or Sect to which this Editor belongs, contends, as that great Man had done before him, that the CHURCH OF ROME IS NOT ANTICHRIST. We know what it was that induced Grotius to maintain that system; it was a project of a comprehension long since out of credit, from a sense of its visionary impracticable nature: what it was that induced this learned man to revive it, a doctrine so injurious to the Protestant Cause, unless a mistaken fondness for that excellent Person's Memory, I confess myself utterly at a loss to conceive.

However, he assures us, "that the fanciful application of *Antichrist* to the Church of Rome, was first made in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, by the FRANCISCAN MONKS: from whom he says the Reformed Churches received it: and then adds—*But the thing will hardly find credit with men of sense, that in a barbarous and unlearned age, the true key to the Apocalypse should be intrusted to these paucity monks, destitute of letters and all knowledge of Antiquity, and denied to the whole Christian Church before, for Thirteen whole Centuries together* \*." No white-washer of Popery could have done better.

In a HISTORY OF THINGS PAST, and recorded in the *learned languages*, the languages of the times, the best Scholar and most sagacious Critic without doubt bids fairest for the best Interpreter: and the *earlier* he is to the subject, the better chance he has of being in the right.

But in a PROPHECY OF THINGS TO COME, foretold in all its circumstances, common sense assures us, that he is most likely to interpret best who lives *latest*, and comes nearest to the time of the *completion*. For he who hath seen one part already fulfilled, a part which gives light to the remainder yet unfulfilled, will certainly be best able to judge of the whole, and best understand to what object it capitally relates.

\* *Ægrè tamen apud cordatos fidem inveniet, seculo barbaro et indocto veram Apocalypseos clavem, per integra tredecim secula omnibus Christianis occultatam, a Monachis omni linguarum et antiquitatum cognitione destitutis, repertam fuisse.* Nov. Test. Græc. Amst. 1752. Tom. II. p. 891, 892.

A third Objection to this papal interpretation, may be drawn from a Principle laid down in the entrance on this Discourse, viz. That

The most exalted genius, with the exactest knowledge of Antiquity, and skill in Languages, could not enable the *early Fathers of the Church* to form any tolerable judgment of a thing at that time almost totally hidden in futurity; especially if it were (as was the case here) in a matter of which the mind of man, for want of the knowledge or experience of any thing similar, could have no conception.

On the other hand, the profoundest ignorance, in the want of all those accomplishments, could not hinder the most stupid *Monk* from seeing what was before his eyes, *Antichrist in Pontificals*, and the *Man of Sin arrived at his full stature*. This extraordinary Personage he might know, by the mere information of his sense, was the bloody tyrant foretold.

On other occasions indeed, for wise and general purposes, it pleased Divine Providence to *bide* the great mysteries of the Gospel *from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto Babes*. But in this, the same dispensation was necessary and unavoidable: And the FRANCISCANS, without a miracle, had the honour of starting ANTICHRIST in his form, which, without a miracle, the *Origen*s and the *Chrysostom*s must hunt after in vain.

But the pleasantest part of the argument is behind.—If (says the learned Critic) we believe the Franciscans when they tell us, that the Pope is the Beast and the whore of Babylon, we must of NECESSITY believe them, when they tell us, that they themselves are the only spiritual Brethren, the true Church, and that the single mark of the true Church is to live on a'm's, and to wear a strait and short capucine \*. Commend me to a Reasoner like this; a Reasoner on necessity. What! because that which the Franciscans saw before their eyes, and we see with ours, and so agree with them, that the Prophecy of Paul and John concerning ANTICHRIST was fulfilled in the POPE, therefore we must of necessity believe these same monks when they say they are the true Church, though no Prophecy hath given us the marks either of them or their pretended church, unless it be in the *Frogs* that came out of the mouth of the BEAST.—If you give a man credit for what he can prove, we are obliged, it seems, to give him credit for what he cannot.

The Commentators of the present age, as living so much later than those Franciscans, have seen more marks of the Beast, as he grew more enraged; for then, as the poet said of his fellow-beast the Tyger,

—he swell'd with angry pride,

And call'd forth all his spots on every side—

and so have been able to give the most convincing proofs that he is the Inhabitant of

\* Qui vero Franciscanis credit, Pontificem Romanam esse belluam et meretricem Babylonicam, isdem etiam credat NECESSE EST solos fratres spirituales esse veram ecclesiam, et unicum veræ ecclesiæ characterem esse vivere pane mendicato, et gestare arcum brevemque cucullum. P. 892.

That *Miracles* and *Prophecies* are the two great Pillars of *revealed Religion*; but raised in succession, each in its proper time and place. From whence it may be collected, that the ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES belongs to the *latter times*, just as the WORKING OF MIRACLES does to the *former*: The use of *Prophecies fulfilled* being to strengthen the evidence of our Faith, from *Miracles performed*; which a long intermission of many ages may seem to have impaired. To suppose, therefore, that the accomplishment of these *Prophecies* happened, and is to be sought for, in the *first ages* of the Church, tends to cross and defeat the gracious purpose of the Founder; while it takes away *Prophecy* from these *latter times*, in which it is wanted, and gives it to the former, which stood in no need of it; bestowing on some Ages a wasteful abundance, and depriving others of a necessary supply.

Thus, on the confession of our Adversaries, the head-quarters of ANTICHRIST being fixed in *Rome*; and, on the conviction of our senses, his tyrannical and usurped Power being exercised in these *latter times*: We come more directly to the main question, WHETHER ANTICHRIST BE A CIVIL POWER, OR A SPIRITUAL?

That it was a SPIRITUAL, we shall now evince, by the following reasons.

1. In these *latter times*, there hath been no Civil power in *ROME*, separate from an Ecclesiastical; but an Ecclesiastical only, which hath drawn after it, a Civil. So that if *ROME* were the seat of ANTICHRIST, and these *latter times* gave rise to his Usurpation; and that, in these *latter times*, there was no such civil power in

the *Seven Hills*; and in this the Protestant World has generally acquiesced. But does the sober part of it believe, that therefore the warm-headed Interpreters of the *Apocalypse* have discovered (as they pretend) the MARTYRS, SAINTS, and WITNESSES, persecuted and despoiled by the SCARLET WHORE and her infernal Abettors, in their own Friends and Parties in Religion? By no means. And why? These Interpreters prove, in the most incontestible manner, that the CHURCH OF *ROME* IS ANTICHRIST; but we see they only fancy they have discovered the Objects of his rage, in those who do honour to their Cause.

ROME,

ROME, but this of Antichrist ; the consequence will be, that ANTICHRIST as such is a SPIRITUAL or Ecclesiastical, and not a CIVIL power.

The thing which hath kept this controversy on a creditable footing, is the TWO POWERS' changing hands as it were, and invading one another's provinces.

So that when we urge the Papists with *Antichrist's* having the marks of a *spiritual power*, and therefore, not the *Imperial* ; they reply, these marks may well be seen in a Power confessedly Civil, since the *Emperor*, like the *Pope*, was always *Pontifex Maximus* here ; and very often, a God, or a Saint at least, hereafter.

When, on the other hand, they urge us with those marks of Antichrist which bespeak him a *civil power* ; we reply, that though the *Pope's* essential power be indeed of the *spiritual* kind, yet he rightly wears these marks of a *secular* ; since such a power he had annexed to his spiritual, (just as the Emperor annexed a spiritual power to the civil) by his investing himself with a civil Dominion, called *St. Peter's Patrimony*.

2. So far in confutation of the System framed by Grotius, to facilitate the project of a visionary Comprehension ; a system of real service to nothing but the Papal Tyranny. It is true, that the evidence here employed is only negative ; yet it comes with a force, which no *positive* evidence can exceed. But to leave no subterfuge for doubt, I shall close all with the other species, the proof *positive*, taken from the Apocalyptic Character of this famous Personage.

3. POWER is male or female indifferently. Hence, the *Power* in question is sometimes said to be the attribute of the MAN OF SIN ; sometimes, of the SCARLET WHORE. A corrupt Church may be found either under a popular or monarchic government. Under a popular, One name and one personage would serve in enigmatic Prophecy, both for the Governor and Governed ; because they are all reciprocally one and the other : and such a Church might be commodiously represented by *one* single Personage. But, under a  
*monarchic*

*monarchic* or despotic Government, the *Acts and Monuments* of such a Church cannot be well represented but under *Two*; the Tyrannic Head and miserable Members, sometimes suffering under, and sometimes, again, sharing in, the Tyranny.

On this account, there was a propriety and elegance in the occasional change of the sex, by the sacred Penmen. The POPE, as Usurper and Tyrant in *Christ's Kingdom*, is represented under the *male image* of ANTICHRIST or the MAN OF SIN; and the CHURCH OF ROME, whose cup of abominations had debauched and intoxicated the world, under the *female image* of the SCARLET WHORE.

And as this affords us the clearest proof, that the Antichristian Power in question is of the SPIRITUAL and not of the civil kind, I shall pursue the Vision in those famous Prophecies which presents the Christian Church under a female form; first, in its celestial, native, purity; and then, in its degenerate and apostate state. For, of all the emblematic Pictures in the Apocalyptic Visions, those two are the least ambiguous.

In the xiith Chapter, a WOMAN comes from *Heaven*, “ clothed  
 “ with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her  
 “ head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child, cried,  
 “ travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered—And behold a  
 “ great RED DRAGON, having *seven heads and ten horns*, and SEVEN  
 “ crowns upon his heads.—And the Dragon stood before the  
 “ Woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her  
 “ child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child,  
 “ who was to rule all nations with a rod of Iron; and the Child  
 “ was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the Woman  
 “ fled into the WILDERNESS, where she had a place prepared of  
 “ God, that they should feed her there.”——

In the xviiiith Chapter, an Angel says to John, “ Come hither,  
 “ I will shew unto thee the judgment of the GREAT WHORE, that  
 “ sitteth upon many Waters: with whom the Kings of the earth  
 “ have committed fornication, and the Inhabiters of the earth have  
 “ been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he  
 “ carried

“ carried me away in the spirit into the WILDERNESS : and I saw a  
 “ WOMAN sit upon a SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST full of names of  
 “ blasphemy, having *seven heads and ten horns*. And the WOMAN  
 “ was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold  
 “ and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand,  
 “ full of abominations and filthiness of fornication. And upon her  
 “ forehead was a name written, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the*  
 “ *Mother of Harlots*, and abominations of the earth. And I saw  
 “ the WOMAN drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with  
 “ the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I won-  
 “ dered with great admiration. And the Angel said unto me,  
 “ Wherefore didst thou marvel ? I will tell thee the Mystery of  
 “ the WOMAN, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the  
 “ *seven heads and ten horns*.—And here is the mind which hath  
 “ Wisdom, the seven heads are *seven mountains* on which the Wo-  
 “ MAN sitteth.—These shall make war with the Lamb ; and the  
 “ Lamb shall overcome them.”

Though the two prophetic Visions, I have here transcribed, be full of evidence concerning the fortunes of ANTICHRIST, and the fate of the SCARLET WHORE ; and that the POPE and See of ROME are no other than the *alias* names of the Criminal ; yet our point being only to shew, that the ANTICHRISTIAN POWER in question is a SPIRITUAL and not a *civil* Power, I have at present nothing to do with its various ABOMINATIONS, here sketched out, further than as some circumstances, concerning these *abominations*, speak more fully to the general truth we are upon.

The SAME WOMAN, who represents the Christian Religion, we see appear in both the Prophetic Visions ;—pure and immaculate when first let down from *Heaven* ; but defiled and contaminated by a long commerce in the *Wilderness* of this world.

In her Virgin-state we see her armed in the celestial panoply of FAITH and KNOWLEDGE ; and, (while in this state) like her almighty Father, *without variableness, or shadow of changing* : expressed by her being *cloathed with the sun, crowned with twelve*

*stars, and the moon under her feet.*—She is in labour with her first-born, and *pained to be delivered*; by which is admirably held out, the dangers and difficulties our holy Religion struggled with, in giving birth to the infant Church, whom the Powers of this world stood ready to devour: strongly expressed by *the great red dragon who stood before the woman ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* Whose purpose was defeated by the extraordinary Providence of Heaven, wakeful for its preservation: *and her child, whose future fortune, we are told, was to rule all nations (when he had degenerated into a Tyrant) with a rod of iron, as soon as brought forth, was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

The WOMAN fled into the WILDERNESS, and was in safety there. I know no better reason for our being informed of this circumstance, than that, when the *fortunes of the Church* are resumed, as they are in the xviith Chapter, we might know where to find her; and, as she was so totally changed, to know her likewise when we had found her. In this Chapter, therefore, the Prophet is led into the WILDERNESS, and introduced to her presence, *sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast*, under the title of *the GREAT WHORE*, and branded in the forehead, as was the wont, in stigmatizing common Prostitutes. Indeed her meretricious dress and equipage sufficiently shew how much she was *fallen from her first love.* She is stript of all the ornaments which she brought down with her from Heaven; and instead of being *clothed*, as at first she was, *with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars*, she is now arrayed in *purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls*: that is, Religion had now exchanged those divine gifts and graces, with which she was first adorned by the Holy Spirit, for worldly wealth and grandeur, to which she was arrived, by coming to a good understanding with her old enemy the *Red Dragon*, or CIVIL POWER: Of whom having received the trappings of Sovereignty, she soon after tore from him the Sovereignty itself. A revolution in her fortunes well expressed by her MOUNTING and RIDING the SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST, the same with the RED DRA-

gon ; as appears from the like number of *heads* and *horns* bestowed upon the Monster under each denomination. Nay, to mark this identity the stronger, the *Crowns* which were on the *seven heads* of the *red Dragon*, while he was Sovereign, and a Persecutor of the Virgin, are no longer found on the *seven heads* of the *scarlet-coloured Beast*, now deprived of Sovereignty, and become subject to the *Scarlet Whore* : Who having got the *Beast*, or degenerated *Civil Power*, at this advantage, rides him at her pleasure ; and, like another Circe, gives him of her *Golden Cup*, full of the *Wine of her abominations, and filthiness of FORNICATION*, while she herself drinks the *BLOOD of the Saints*.—*The Kings of the earth* (says the Prophet) *commit fornication with the Whore* : i. e. in this impure mixture of the two Powers, *civil* and *spiritual*, both become polluted ; the *Civil* uses Religion for an engine of State, to support TYRANNY ; and the *Spiritual* gets invested with the rights of the Magistrate, to enable her to PERSECUTE.

But if we attend to the Prophetic Language of St. John, we shall see more clearly the beauty of this representation. His language abounds in a mixed *phraseology* formed on the different natures of the two Dispensations : And expressive of ideas belonging, sometimes to the one, sometimes to the other system. Each of these sorts the Prophet employs occasionally, as each best contributes to the force and elegance of his discourse. So here, *the Cup of fornication* alludes to the degeneracy of the Jewish ; in which, the figurative name, for IDOLATRY, was *Fornication* and *Adultery*.—*The blood of the Saints* alludes to the distressed condition of the Christian ; and more plainly signifies PERSECUTION for Opinion. These are the two great Reproaches of all Religion, natural and revealed : and each was the peculiar Pest, the one of Judaism, the other of Christianity. For IDOLATRY violates the very essence of the LAW, and PERSECUTION defeats all the virtue of the Gospel. These two infernal Tyrannies, the Prophet represents as the Assessors of the SCARLET WHORE, now become Sovereign of the Earth.

But if we want to know the ingredients of this enchanted Cup, with which *the Inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk*, St. Paul will tell us. In his account of the *side-board* of the GREAT WHORE, he tells us, that “In the latter times some shall depart  
 “ from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and Doctrines  
 “ of Devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience  
 “ seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to  
 “ abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received \*.” In which words the Holy Spirit graphically describes,—*the Worship of Saints—the fabrication of false Miracles—the invention of Purgatory, and the means contrived for escaping it—monkish and clerical Celibacy—Pagan fasts—and Jewish distinction of meats.*

The last excess of the *Woman in purple and scarlet colour*, after having intoxicated all others, is the getting drunk, herself—I saw *the Woman* (says the Prophet) *drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.*—In *lies and hypocrisy* the Whore began her reign; and in PERSECUTION, she filled up the measure of her Tyranny. Nothing now remained, but the coming vengeance of Heaven, when the TEN HORNS, or the Civil Powers of Europe confederated, *shall hate the Whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire* †. But this being an unfulfilled Prophecy, a matter yet in the womb of Time, we make no further use of it, than just, by quoting it, to cultivate and encourage a disposition in the RULERS OF THE EARTH, to facilitate the great work which Providence hath ordained to bring to pass by their ministry.

To conclude, I presume I have now performed what I undertook, (and it is all that is necessary for the support of the Protestant cause) viz. to prove, that ANTICHRIST and the SCARLET WHORE are a SPIRITUAL Power; and therefore, no other than the POPE and CHURCH OF ROME.

\* 1 Tim. chap. iv. ver. 1. et seq.

† Chap. xvii. ver. 16.

One of the soberest as well as soundest Reasoners of this reasoning Age, who, free from the enthusiasm of party-zeal, carried with him to the study of Scripture all the Philosophic light and precision, which he had learnt of his Masters, LOCKE and NEWTON (who themselves employed the richest of their stores in the like sacred service) after having paid the closest attention to the predictions of the *Apocalypse*, hath, as the result of all, been bold enough to put the truth of REVEALED RELIGION itself on the reality of that prophetic Spirit which here foretells the desolation of CHRIST'S CHURCH AND KINGDOM by *Antichrist*; and the restoration of both to their original PURITY and POWER. “ If, (says he) IN THE DAYS “ of *St. Paul and St. John*, there was any footstep of such a sort of “ power as this in the world; or if there HAD BEEN any such power “ in the world; or if there WAS THEN any appearance of probability, “ that could make it enter into the heart of man to imagine that “ there EVER COULD BE any such kind of power in the world, “ much less in the *Temple or Church of God*; and if there be not “ NOW such a power actually and conspicuously exercised in the “ world; and if any picture of this power, DRAWN AFTER THE “ EVENT, can now describe it more plainly and exactly than it was “ originally described in the words of the Prophecy; then may it, “ with some degree of plausibleness, be suggested, that the Pro- “ phecies are nothing more than enthusiastic Imaginations \*.”

\* Evidences of natural and revealed Religion, by Dr. S. CLARKE, Rector of St. James's Westminster, p. 262.



# DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE RESURRECTION.



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## DISCOURSE XII.

### ON THE RESURRECTION.

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1 COR. Chap. XV. ver. 17.

IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN, YE ARE YET  
IN YOUR SINS.

**T**HUS it is, the holy Apostle concludes, in order to *compleat* the Proof of the Miracle of the RESURRECTION, which he had supported just before, from human testimony. “ I delivered “ unto you, (says he) *first of all*, that which I also received, how “ that Christ died—that he rose again—and that he was seen of “ Cephas, then of the twelve : after that he was seen of above five “ hundred Brethren at once : of whom the greater part remain unto “ this present ; but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen “ of James ; then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen “ of me also, as of one born out of due time \*.”

\* Ver 3—8.

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Would

Would we but give reasonable attention to holy Scripture, we should find, that it not only affords us *Truth*, but likewise points out to us the *true way* of forming arguments for its support. Of which, these two passages of St. Paul, when laid together, are a signal instance: Wherein he hath intimated the *two conditions* requisite to intitle a MIRACLE to the claim of our belief; and shewn that *this* of the RESURRECTION hath those two conditions; which we may expect to find in every *Miracle* that God is pleased to work, and to recommend to our belief: that is to say, 1st, That it be of so high importance as to be even *necessary* to Revelation, and to the religious Dispensation to which it belongs. And 2dly, That this abstract importance and necessity be realized by human testimony.

If common facts, actions within the verge of nature and human agency, come fully recommended to us by the attestation of knowing and credible witnesses, nothing further is required to win the assent of reasonable men. No one doubts that Augustus Cæsar taxed the Roman Empire, or that Herod governed in Judæa, because historians concur to support these facts, and there is no improbability, in the nature of things, to call them in question. But in the case of *miraculous events*, the matter is widely different. The arrest and controul of the laws of Nature, either mediately or immediately by their Author, is a thing which *uniform experience* hath rendered so extremely improbable, as to balance, at least, the best civil testimony. And why?—Actions within the verge of Nature and human agency, carry their visible *causes* along with them, or at least we require none, as knowing, they are *intrinsically* there. But, in acts miraculous, the immediate *efficient cause* is extrinsic, and consequently doubtful. And where men neither see nor perceive a *cause*, they conclude there is none; or, in other words, that the report is false. So that when the whole Evidence of a miraculous fact is comprized in human testimony, and that fact contrary to UNIFORM EXPERIENCE, the PHILOSOPHIC mind will remain in doubt.

But

But though, in all Miracles, the *efficient cause* be unknown; yet, in those which Revelation recommends to our belief, the FINAL CAUSE always stands apparent. And if that cause be found so important as to make the Miracle *necessary* to the ends of the Dispensation, we have all we can require to entitle it to our assent.

I can therefore conceive THREE CASES, and but three, in which a *Miracle*, offered to our consideration, can be thus happily circumstanced.

I. When it is worked as the CREDENTIAL of a Messenger coming from God, with some general Revelation to Man.

II. When it is worked, TO SECURE THE VERACITY of God's revealed Word, against an impious Power employing its authority, with a declared or professed purpose to convict the divine Declaration of falshood.

III. When the SUBJECT of the Miracle makes so ESSENTIAL a Part in the œconomy of the revealed Dispensation, as that without this miracle, the whole must fall to the ground.

Now, in all these *Cases*, where we discern a great, an important, and a necessary purpose for an extraordinary interposition, an attestation to the truth of a *Miracle*, by the same fulness of evidence which is sufficient to establish a natural fact, is sufficient to warrant our belief; who have the *moral attributes of God* to secure us from error. And here I presume I have fairly given what Dr. Middleton and his Adversaries called upon one another to give; and yet Both, in their turns, declined; viz. a CRITERION, to enable men to distinguish (for all the purposes of religious belief) true Miracles from false or doubtful. And no wonder they declined; for both Parties were in the Class of those of whom Seneca speaks—*Nesciunt NECESSARIA, quia SUPERVACANEA dedicerunt.*

The confining our belief of Miracles within these bounds, I apprehend, wipes away all the miserable sophistry of our pretended PHILOSOPHERS, both at home and abroad, against MIRACLES, from their being CONTRARY TO GENERAL EXPERIENCE IN THE ORDINARY

NARY COURSE OF THINGS. At least the *true Philosopher* thought it did, when he made that strict inquisition into Truth, towards the conclusion of his immortal Work.—“ Though the COMMON EXPERIENCE (says he) and the ORDINARY COURSE OF THINGS have “ justly a mighty influence on the minds of men, to make them “ give or refuse credit to any thing proposed to their belief, yet “ there is ONE CASE, wherein the STRANGENESS of the facts lessens “ not the assent to a fair testimony given of it. For where such “ *supernatural* events are SUITABLE TO ENDS AIMED AT BY HIM “ who has the power to change the course of Nature, there, under “ such circumstances, they may be the FITTER to procure belief, “ by how much the more they are BEYOND OR CONTRARY TO ORDINARY OBSERVATION. This is the proper case of MIRACLES, “ which, well attested, do not only find credit themselves, *but give “ it also to other truths, which need such confirmation \**.”

Nor is the confining of the belief of Miracles within these bounds of a SUFFICIENT CAUSE, less beneficent to Revelation, than it is subversive of the PHILOSOPHY in vogue.

1. It will afford a strong mark of distinction between the *Miracles* claimed by the Revealed Religions we call true, and those pretended to be worked by the Deity, under Paganism; for I will venture to affirm that none of those were supported by any thing that looked like *a sufficient cause*. The most illustrious of them, and which hath had the fortune to gain credit with some Divines, was the eruption at Delphi to defeat and punish the sacrilege of Brennus: Now, in this case, there was so far from being a *sufficient cause* for the interposition of the Deity, that there were *sufficient causes* why he should not interpose; such as rivetting men in their Idolatry, by a visible protection of the most celebrated of all their Oracles; and inflaming their Superstitions, by persuading them that to dedicate immense and useless wealth in their Temples, was a matter pleasing to the Deity.

\* LOCKE'S Essay concerning Human Understanding, Vol. II. Chap. of the Degrees of Assent, Sect. 13. p. 286.

2. But principally, this restraint will give an immediate check to FRAUD and SUPERSTITION, in their full career to enslave a believing World, by the prodigies of ANTICHRIST, whose coming hath been (as St. Paul foretold) *after the working of Satan, with power, and signs, and lying wonders* \*. How much this check is wanted to our nature, may be seen by that universal inbred infirmity of the human mind for the MARVELLOUS. This hath filled all ages with the monstrous births of Prodigies; in part conceived from our ignorance of Physics; in part from a wanton and indulged imagination; and in part from the pride of self-importance. However, certain it is, that Prodigies and Portents are the favourite as well as natural Issue of the uncultivated, the undisciplined Mind. And so great is the rage for that pleasure which the contemplation of MONSTROUS THINGS affords, that when we are no longer able, in a season more barren than ordinary, to delude ourselves in good earnest, the Mind takes a wonderful delight in imposing on itself in jest. Hence that exquisite pleasure, at present so fashionable to indulge, in the tricks of LEGERDEMAIN; which, if performed with more than ordinary dexterity, turns us round again to our serious delusions; and tempts us to hope that the Juggler, who so deals with us, may indeed deal with the Devil.

But should it so happen, that this Performer of Wonders is less delighted with the honour of being thought a Conjuror, than they are with the pleasure of conferring it upon him, he has no way left, but to make his spectators as wise as himself, by revealing the secret resorts of his mystery. But, from that moment, the pleasure is at an end.

Who can wonder then, that in their serious hours they should be as delighted to find *Miracles* in the works of *Nature*, and as thankless to be undeceived?

—— *Pol me occidistis, amici*

—— *cui sic extorta voluptas.*

\* 2 Thess. chap. ii. ver. 9.

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But when Religion is once of the Council, she takes the Delusion into her own keeping.—And the natural passion to *find*, meets with an equal, though less natural passion to *supply* the MARVELOUS: And while the Fabricator of false Miracles improves simple Knavery into PIOUS ZEAL, the enchanting pleasure of the delusion inflames natural folly into ENTHUSIASM. And the two parties now acting in Bodies \*, and frequently changing hands, produce all that mischief of superstition and fanaticism, which, but for the dull pains of *Legendary Writers*, we should hardly have conceived possible to be effected.

For if men be so ready to *invent* a prodigy without any other motive than the honour of spreading the wonder; What must be their industry in the Trade, when Religion hallows the Manufacture? And if, as hath been often seen, they not only find the *materials*, but form them into shape; that is, forge the Miracle under their own ministry: then their Persons become as holy as their Works: and their zeal to propagate the wonder rises in proportion to the interests of their own glory. If some be thus forward to *invent*, there are others as ready to *embrace* a FALSE MIRACLE. It sometimes sooths them in the errors, sometimes rivets them in the crimes of their Religion. Now it supports them against an opposing Sect, and now again enables them to triumph in their Own. In the mean time, all agreeing that the Church once had this celestial Gift, and none knowing how they came to lose it, each Society of Religion concludes it to be still entailed upon them.

Thus we see how every disorderly passion of the human breast conspires to deform the fair face of Nature, and cover it with prodigies and portents. This, indeed, should make *Divines* cautious, but it should not make PHILOSOPHERS vain. For, even these great Personages know no more of nature than they see; and all they

\* Sane verissimum est, et tanquam secretum quoddam naturæ hominum animos, cum congregati sint, magis quem soli sint, affectibus et impressionibus patere. Bacon, Aug. Sc. L. 2. c. 3.

see, if not a *miracle*, is yet a *mystery*. For (as the Poet sings) they

—— steal to Nature's Closet, and from thence

Bring nought but UNDECYPHER'D CHARACTERS;

*Characters* that will inform them no more of God's *natural*, than they do of his *moral* Government. In the mean time, the DIVINE will be better instructed in Both, if he be so wise to confine the belief of *things supernatural* within the bounds here pointed out.

But before I proceed to a farther consideration of them, it will be proper to explain a restraint to which this general Proposition must submit.

We have said, that MIRACLES, circumstanced as above, claim credit with every reasonable man. But from thence, we are not to conclude, that all *Miracles*, not thus circumstanced, are *false*.

But then, it may be asked, For what end or purpose were those worked, which have not the common belief for their *object*; a point seemingly essential to the use of Miracles; and without which, they appear to have been worked in vain?

The question is not impertinent, and will deserve an answer; which the following Case may possibly afford.

Jesus having chosen his *twelve disciples*, and given *them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease*\*, sends them forth to proclaim the Gospel, under the following Commission—"Go not into the *way of the Gentiles*, and into any *City of the Samaritans* enter ye not. "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as "ye go, preach, saying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. Heal "the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils: "freely ye have received, freely give.—Ye shall be brought before "Governors and Kings for my sake, for a testimony against them "and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought "how, or what ye shall speak. *For it is not ye that speak, but the "spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*†."

\* Matt. chap. x. ver. 1.

† From ver. 5th to 20th inclusive.

In the execution of this work, the aid and assistance of two distinct species of *Miracles* is promised: *The curing their bearers of all diseases and infirmities; and the defence of themselves, by the spirit of the Father speaking in them.* In the first, the Disciples were *Agents*; in the other, they were only *passive*. The first, as Credentials of their Mission, was objected to the belief of those concerned with their Message: The other was only of the nature of a promise and instruction to themselves; with which, no others having to do, it was not objected to their belief. From hence arose the difference, and not from the Missionaries being *active* in the one species of Miracles, and *passive* in the Other. For though the passive Miracle here was not thus *objective*, yet the like Miracle on the day of Pentecost *was*. The reason in each case is obvious: on the day of Pentecost, the Disciples *spoke with tongues*; which being a sensible Miracle, became their Credential: here, they only *spoke with discretion*, which they might do without a Miracle, and was therefore confined to their own use.

In this case, then, we have *a true Miracle not objective* to the belief of others: which yet, as we shall now see, was not worked in vain.

The Disciples, when sent out upon this Mission, had a very imperfect idea of the *Gospel*; and an absurd conception of the office of the *Messiah*. For the removal of their spiritual blindness, they were to wait (so the œconomy of the Dispensation required) till Jesus, on his *ascension*, should send amongst them the *Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things*. In the mean time, they were under the more immediate direction of their Master; who, occasionally, corrected their mistakes, as circumstances, in their attendance on him, made it necessary.

Amongst their capital Prejudices were the following—That the Gospel of Jesus concerned only the Jews, and the Orthodox Race of Abraham. In this error they would be much confirmed on the very opening of their *Commission*, which expressly forbids them to address themselves either to the *Gentiles* or the *Samaritans*\*.

\* Ver. 5, 6.

They

They were possessed with an Opinion, that the Jewish *cere-monial Law* was perpetual ; as appears from the story of Peter's Vision.

They had no conception that the *reign of the Messiah* could be any other than a temporal Dominion ; as appears by their addresses to their Master for Preferment, and by their squabbles amongst themselves for Superiority.

Overrun with these mistakes and errors, they were not to be left to themselves, when first sent from under the wing of their Master, who had enough to do to prevent the mischiefs \* arising from them, even while they were constantly attendant on his person.

So that these men appear to be very unfit Instruments to *preach the Gospel* : As indeed they were ; and therefore, on the present occasion, not employed in that service. For this their first Mission was not to *preach*, but only to *proclaim* the Gospel—that the *Kingdom of Heaven was at hand*†.

This was all they had to do. Yet having the *supernatural* power of working Miracles, *Credentials* which proved, that what they had to say came from God, and being, at the same time, vain and presumptuous, the natural effect of their blindness, they would be strongly tempted to exceed their *Commission*, when called before Kings and Magistrates ; and, instead of proclaiming the approach of their Master's Gospel, would be too ready to preach their own. Such was the danger : The difficulty of preventing it is apparent : Jesus, therefore, with admirable provision, forbids them to think of any studied defence in this critical juncture ; for that they should be supernaturally supplied by the *Spirit of the Father speaking in them* ‡, with all that was fit and proper to be said on the occasion.

But then, it may be further asked,—“ as this *Miracle* was worked only for the use of the Mission, and worked almost as soon as promised ; What occasion for the previous intimation ; or for having the intimation recorded : ”

\* See Luke ix. 54—56.

† Ver. 7.

‡ Ver. 20.

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To this I answer, 1st, A *promise made*, not only set their minds at ease concerning the consequences of their predication ; and gave them full liberty to attend to the principal part committed to their charge ; but the *prohibition* accompanying it prevented their mixing the folly of their own mistaken fancies with the inspired Apology of the Holy Spirit.

2. The *promise was recorded* for an internal mark of the divinity of our Religion : with which *marks* the Holy Spirit hath, in great variety and abundance, adorned and supported the Sacred Scriptures, the only *Rule of Faith*. And by thus *recording*, it is now, indeed, become (what it was not at the time of working) the reasonable object of our belief.

And now to proceed to our general subject, and consider THE THREE CASES more at large.

I. First, “ When a miracle is worked, as the CREDENTIAL of a Messenger coming from God with some *general Revelation* to Man, we may safely give it credit, as such a *Credential* is not below the occasion, but even necessary to accomplish the purpose intended.”

To understand the NECESSITY of this *means* to so important an *end*, we must consider, That though, indeed, the *Miracle* is to be estimated on the nature of the Doctrines for whose confirmation it is worked ; so that if the Doctrines be *worthy* of God, we may be assured (as his goodness will not suffer us to be unavoidably led into, and kept in error) that such a *supernatural work* is the operation of his hands ; and that, if *unworthy* of him, it is the delusion of men or other more malicious Agents: Though in this view, I say, the *nature of the uncommon operation* must be estimated on the *nature of the Doctrines* ; yet the *immediate original* of the Doctrines (though not the *truth* of them) can be only known by the *extraordinary work* which doth, or doth not, accompany the publication of them.

For it does not follow, in any case, that what is simply worthy of God, comes therefore immediately, and in an extraordinary way,  
from

from him : because we know not to what heights of moral knowledge even the unassisted understanding may arrive. Nor doth our full experience, that all the Wisdom of Greece and Rome comes infinitely short of the GOSPEL, therefore prove, that the Gospel was sent immediately from God. We can but ill guess what may be produced by a studious Mind, assisted by a vigorous temperament, and happy organization of the body, when a variety of other aids, from the natural climate, and the civil state of Liberty and literature, concur.

The amazement into which Sir Isaac Newton's Discoveries threw the learned World, as soon as it was able to comprehend them, sufficiently shews what little conception it had, that the natural faculties of Man could rise so high, and spread so wide.

Indeed, when the divinity of the Gospel was thought to be proved ; or, to speak more properly, when it was taken for granted ; then, we accustomed ourselves to form a conclusion, such as it was, from the *experience* we had of its innate excellence, that this System could be only of divine Original.

Yet this, at best, is but what the Logicians call an argument *ad ignorantiam*. Strictly speaking, there is no ground of religious belief strong enough to bear so great an interest, but that which rises from MIRACLES, worked by the first Preachers of a new Religion, in confirmation of their Mission. *Miracles*, and Miracles alone, invincibly prove that that Doctrine, which was seen to be worthy of God, did indeed come *immediately* from Him.—Such was the sentiment of that great man \*, whose words we have quoted above, on another occasion.—“ This (says he) is “ the proper case of *Miracles*, which, well attested, do not only “ find credit themselves, *but give it also to other truths which NEED “ such confirmation.*”

It is true, that, to all this, it has been said, and, because it could not be proved, it has been said again and again, that we

\* Locke.

move in a vicious circle, when, 1. First, we prove the *Miracle* by the *Doctrines*: 2. And then again, the *Doctrines* by the *Miracle*.

And it is true, had I used the word DOCTRINE in the same sense in both Propositions, I had certainly committed this paralogism. But I have not done so. The *word*, in the first Proposition, signifies, *a Doctrine agreeable to the truth of things, and demonstrated to be so, by natural Reason*. In the second Proposition, the *word* is used to signify, *a Doctrine immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, revealed by God*. So that here is no vicious return, and nothing proved: It is the gradual *proceſſion* of two truths, till the whole argument be compleated. They give, indeed, mutual assistance to one another; not by Either's taking back, when its turn was served, what it had given; but by Both's continuing to urge what they continued to hold, for their mutual support.

This Charge, therefore, against the integrity of the Reasoning is founded in a gross mistake.

A mistake which has encouraged the same undefigning men to propagate another; viz. that *it is not Miracles, but the Natures of the moral and religious Doctrines*, in which the true Proof of their Divinity consists.

Into this absurd tenet, some (as we intimate) may have been betrayed by themselves; but the far greater part, I am persuaded, have designedly betrayed others: while they themselves saw the destructive consequences, and liked the Principles the better for those consequences. For aiming to reduce CHRISTIANITY (which they professed to believe) to a mere REPUBLICATION OF THE RELIGION OF NATURE; this way of reasoning,—“The Doctrines taught are worthy of God, and therefore are “of God,”—affords as good a foundation for the REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, as it did for the first PROMULGATION of it.

Now CHRISTIANITY may be (I ought rather to say, is) understood in two senses; either as a REPUBLICATION of the Religion

gion of Nature ; or as the REVELATION of a new Religion ingrafted upon *that of Nature*.

Let us see then how this argument stands upon either foundation.

1. CHRISTIANITY, a REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, is worthy of God ; and therefore comes from him : i. e. is *true, or agreeable to the nature of things*.

2. CHRISTIANITY, a REVELATION of a new Religion, ingrafted upon *that of Nature*, is worthy of God, and therefore comes from him ; i. e. is *true, or divine*.

1. The conclusion of the first Argument, from the *worthiness* of the Doctrine, that it is *agreeable to the nature of things*, we see, holds ; and infers all that a REPUBLICATOR ought to infer from it ; and, for the credit of his understanding, I will presume to say, is all he would have inferred from it : For if Christianity were only such a *Republication*, it is reasonable to suppose, it was *republished* in the same manner that it was at first *published* ; that is to say, by innate impressions, and abstract principles.

2. The conclusion of the second Argument, from the *worthiness* of the Doctrine, is impertinent and false ; for the DIVINITY of Christianity, which the REVELATIONIST would have to be inferred from it, is not inferred.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, that the only solid evidence that a Doctrine, worthy of God, did immediately come from him in the manner pretended, is, that the Messenger of the new Religion had the CREDENTIAL of *Miracles* to produce.

And here, in confirmation of all that hath been said, let me observe, that Divine Wisdom, on the propagation of a new Religion, hath so strictly appropriated *Miracles* for the *Credentials* of a Messenger sent, that JOHN THE BAPTIST, the Precursor of this Messenger, with tidings of his near approach, worked no Miracles. Yet had Miracles been only worked, according to a new-fangled notion, to make the Multitude *attentive*, no one had more need of Miracles than John the Baptist. But CHRYSOSTOM seems to have understood

understood Revelation better than these modern Divines, when he supposes that even Jesus himself worked no Miracle till after his Baptism; i. e. till the time that he addressed himself to his Mission, and had need of his *Credentials*; and such a need it was, that he himself says of the unbelieving Jews, *If I had not done amongst them the works which none other Man did, they had not had sin*\*.

II. "The second Case, in which a *Miracle* is so circumstanced as to claim the belief of reasonable men, is, when it is worked to defend and secure the veracity of God's revealed word, against an impious blasphemer of it, who employs all his power to discredit and defeat it."

This is an occasion as important, and even more necessary, than *that* in the first Case. For though, without the attestation of *Miracles*, the Religion said to be intrusted to the first Teachers of it, can never be clearly proved to be an extraordinary Revelation from God, yet doth not that Want imply, in itself, the contrary. But in the Case in hand, the neglecting to interpose *miraculously*, when nothing but such an interposition can secure the honour of the Prediction, destroys all pretensions to the truth of that Revelation in which such Prediction is found.

Hence we conclude, that in this Case too, a *Miracle*, well attested by human authority, is one of the most legitimate objects of belief.

Of this kind was the supernatural interposition which defeated the malicious purpose of JULIAN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM. Here every thing concurs to make it a fit example of the Credit due to a Miracle of the second Class.—Jesus had foretold that the *Jewish Temple* should never be rebuilt: JULIAN was determined to give the lie to the Prediction. For this purpose, he employed every *means* that the Master of the World could put in use. Yet the design, after infinite preparations for the speedy accomplishment of it, was suddenly defeated, without any change

\* John xv. 24.

in the purpose of Julian, or in that of the Ministers he employed. Of which no possible reason can be assigned, but what the concurrent, and at that time uncontradicted, evidence of Contemporaries and Eye-witnesses of the best credit, both Pagans and Christians, have given at large; namely, that when Alypius, Julian's favorite Minister, a man active, able, and determined, and bearing the same hate to the Christian name with his Master, had, by the imperial command, set himself to the vigorous execution of the work, in which he had all the assistance the Governor of the Province could afford him, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations of the old ruined Temple, did, with frequent and reiterated attacks, soon render the place inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; the victorious element continuing, as it were, resolutely bent to drive them to a distance, as often as they approached to renew their labour. So that Alypius, struggling in vain against this obstinate resistance, was at length forced, in very despair, to give over the Enterprize.

Now from this Miracle, worked by the Almighty himself, for the most important end, no honest man, without the highest unreasonableness, can withhold his assent. But this matter has been discussed at large \*; and with such Evidence, that there would be no hazard in staking the whole credit of Christianity on its truth †.

III. "We come now to the third Case, where the subject of a *Miracle* makes so essential a part in the oeconomy of the revealed Dispensation, as to give it its completion; the want of which would destroy the whole, and render it *vain and fruitless*."

\* See a Discourse concerning the Earthquake and fire Eruption which defeated Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem; in the fourth volume of this collection.

† I say this with the greater confidence, since, when this book, by command of a very eminent Personage in France, was directed to be translated into that language, for the use of the despisers of *Miracles*, the PHILOSOPHERS, as they are pleased to call themselves, these men promised their disciples a speedy confutation of it as soon as it should appear. It did soon appear: when their silence shewed no kind of disposition in them to keep their word.

This will be best illustrated in the *Miracle* of the RESURRECTION: which, because it will return us back to our text, and keep us there, will deserve a more particular disquisition.

Jesus, as hath been explained elsewhere, had a twofold Character: the one, of a Messenger from God *simply*, with the tidings of salvation: the other, of a Messenger promised, under the title of the *Messiah*. His credentials, under each of these Characters, were MIRACLES. Those worked by him in his life, as Credentials, referred to a *divine Messenger simply*: that of the *Resurrection*, at his death, respected his other Character of *Messiah*, or a *divine Messenger promised*. And the necessity of this *Miracle* may be seen even from hence, that the antient Prophecies had foretold it.

They had said, on the one hand, that the *Messiah* should be exposed to afflictions and distresses; to all the miseries of life; and to a violent and untimely death. On the other hand, they had said, that the work should prosper in his hands; that he should triumph over all his enemies, and raise and establish an everlasting Kingdom. The contradiction in these accounts, if the promised Reign be understood as *temporal*, shews, it must be interpreted of a *spiritual* Kingdom in Heaven. But this latter could not commence while Jesus lay under the dominion of the Grave. He must of necessity, therefore, be raised, by the power of the Father, from the Sepulchre. And this is what St. PETER means, when, speaking of the Messiah, he says,—*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death*; BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT \*.

Again, The very nature of the *Christian Dispensation* likewise required of necessity the *Resurrection* of Jesus from the dead. Christianity is the restoration of lapsed and forfeited Man, to life and immortality, from the power and dominion of Death. But the course of human nature continuing the same, after this restoration, which it held before; and Death still visibly existing, though it had

\* Acts, Chap. ii. ver. 24.

lost its sting, there seemed to be need of some sensible evidence, to evince the truth of this entire change of the Order of things.

And this Restoration being procured at the price of the death and sufferings of Christ, sacrificed on the Cross; when the price was paid, and paid thus *visibly*, the nature of the compact demanded, that the benefit should be as *visibly* possessed and enjoyed; and both one and the other openly exemplified in the same Person. If the REDEEMER himself was not seen to enjoy the fruits of the Redemption procured, what HOPES had remained for the rest of Mankind? Would not the natural conclusion have been, that the expedient of *Redemption*, by the death and sacrifice of Jesus, had proved ineffectual? This is the conclusion which St. PAUL himself makes, in my Text, IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN, YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS: so necessarily connected, in his opinion, was *this Miracle* with the very essence of the Christian Religion.—But now (adds the Apostle) *is Christ risen, and become the FIRST FRUITS of them that slept*; i. e. *His Resurrection* is the thing which both *assured* and *sanctified* all that were to follow. For the Jewish *first fruits*, to which the expression alludes, were of the *nature*, and secured the *plenty*, of the approaching Harvest.

Having thus explained the several natures of the THREE CASES, in which a *Miracle* will deserve the credit of all reasonable men; before I proceed further in the *last*, the proper subject of this Discourse, let me make one general observation that concerns them all.—In the *first case*, it is necessary that God, the Author of every arrest of Nature in its established course, should use the ministry of his Messengers in that service, since *Miracles* are the *Credentials* of their Mission. But in the *other two cases*, it seems more agreeable to the dignity of their several occasions, that the *Miracles* should proceed immediately and directly from Himself, as we see they did in the examples given of those of the *second* and *third class*: the defeat of Julian, and the Resurrection of Jesus, being both worked by his Almighty Hand in Jerusalem itself.

But, to go on again with the Miracle of the *Refurrection*, the *necessity* of which hath been fully explained.

Now, in matters of Religion, as that which is necessary in one view, is never without its *uses* and *expediencies* in another, permit me, in a few words, to illustrate this truth, a truth of so much importance, before I come to the *necessity*. The heathen World had a general notion of *another life*. But the RESURRECTION of this mortal Body never once entered into their imagination. It is true, some modern writers have been misled to think otherwise, by an imperfect view of the famous STOICAL RENOVATION: which, however, was so far from bearing any likeness, or yielding any support to the CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION, that it is absolutely destructive of it. The Sages of antiquity had discovered many qualities in the human *Soul*, which inclined them to conjecture that it might survive the Body. But every property they knew of *Matter* led them to conclude, that, at the separation of the two constituent parts, the Body was finally dissolved into the Elements out of which it rose. And that sect of Philosophy, which most favoured and cultivated the Doctrine of *the immortality of the Soul*, considered the Body only as its Prison, into which it was thrust, by way of punishment, for its pre-existent crimes; and from which, when it had undergone its destined penance, and purgation, it was to be finally delivered and released. Nay, so little did the Doctrine of the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY enter into their most improved conceptions, that when at Athens, the very seat of Science, St. Paul preached *Jesus and the Refurrection*, they took the second Enunciation to be, like the first, a new Divinity, a certain God-defs called ANASTASIS\*.

With

\* This is CHRYSOSTOM's opinion of the matter. But BENTLEY tells us, that *they too well understood the notion of a resurrection, to think it a Goddefs*.—Which of the two Doctors was likely to be best acquainted with the genius and state of Paganism, when St. Paul preached at Athens, must be left to the judgment of the Reader. This at least is certain, that the reason the latter Doctor gives, why the Athenians could not mistake

With all these prejudices, so unfavourable to the *resurrection of the body*, nothing less than the *assurance* of the best-attested *Miracle* in confirmation of it could have reconciled the Gentile World to the credibility of so incredible a Doctrine. This may be said with the greater confidence, since St. Paul himself, on this occasion, appears to have been of the same opinion. For when he had rectified their mistake concerning *Jesus and the Resurrection*, and had given them a precise account of the Doctrine of the Gospel, in which he explained to them, that the *resurrection* meant a *resurrection of the dead*\*, he adds—*whereof God hath given ASSURANCE, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD* †.

Thus hath this capital Miracle, the *seal of our Redemption*, all the evidence for its truth, which can arise either from its *necessity* or its use. It was proclaimed by the public decrees of the Father; and accomplished to verify the Character of the Son, and facilitate the progress of his Gospel. Causes so important, that we can conceive none more worthy the care of the Lord of the Universe; viz. than that what had been promised, should be fulfilled; and what was now preached, should be miraculously confirmed.

After so strong internal evidence to prove it *right and fit to be done*, all that was wanting to establish it, was the external, to prove it *actually done*. And this St. Paul, as we have seen above, pours out with a very liberal hand.

It hath been observed, that a *Miracle*, which would claim credit with us, must, besides the evidence of human testimony, (which

*Anastasis* for a Goddess, because they too well understood the notion of a resurrection, is a very bad one, since they had no notion of it at all, unless they mistook (which is very unlikely), as the learned Doctor seems to have done, the *Stoical renovation* for the *Christian resurrection*: or if they did mistake it, so gross an error could never hinder them from committing a less, the mistaking *Anastasis* for a Goddess. They were undoubtedly well acquainted with many other *moral entities* (whatever was the case here); yet that did not hinder them from turning these *entities* into *Goddesses*, whenever dire Superstition drove or invited them to seek aid from *new Divinities*.

\* Acts, chap. xvii. ver. 32.

Ver. 32.

it hath in common with natural facts) have a strong *internal evidence* likewise, containing the use, expedience, and necessity of the operation. But when once this *internal* evidence is given, it has the advantage of a natural fact, in the force wherewith the *external* concludes.

I will explain my meaning.—When the witnesses to a common fact vary, in unessential circumstances, from one another, it is sometimes, though not always, a diminution to its credit. For human testimony being that on which alone it stands, whatever impeaches that, weakens the credibility of the fact. But, in an act *miraculous*, the first ground of its stability being its *internal* Evidence, when human testimony hath realized that, such variety takes little from its credit, which stands upon those two supports: the testimony that the thing was done, resting on the strong foundation, that it was fit and necessary to be done.

So far as to the difference which arises from the nature of things. Another arises from the situation of the Reporters — Witnesses to a miraculous fact well understand that the ground of its credit lies in the fitness and necessity of the thing. Such Witnesses, therefore, when recording their own knowledge, will be naturally more indifferent in arranging circumstances; from the want of which, a variation amongst several Witnesses to the same fact often arises. While those who speak to a common fact, knowing all its support consists in the veracity of their evidence, will be more intent to preserve their credit, by a studious attention to the numeration and order of all its circumstances.

This will shew us the unnecessary pains which some late Defenders of *this Miracle* have taken, against the attacks of Infidelity.—Licentious Writers thought they had discovered some discordancies or contradictions in the Evidence of the four Evangelists concerning it: Jesus (as they say) after his resurrection appearing, by the testimony of this Evangelist, at the same moment of time, to one person, and, by the testimony of that Evangelist, to another person: an objection that might seem to have weight against a fact standing  
only

only on the foot of a natural adventure, and having no reasons of necessity or convenience to support the testimony.

Now these defenders of Religion took the case as their Adversaries were pleased to give it to them; they confined themselves to inquire into the represented fact, as if it had been one of a mere civil kind, and supported only by *external evidence*, the testimony of witnesses.

No wonder such defences should be, as in reality they have been, very unsatisfactory. Whereas, had the Advocates of Religion first inquired into the nature of the fact, and shewn, that one that is miraculous, and has a claim to our credit, stands on a wider and more complicated basis than mere human testimony; that this of the *Resurrection* in particular is thus supported; that it rises on the strong foundation of Necessity; that is to say, that it fulfilled the Jewish Prophecies, and compleated the Christian Dispensation; had they done this, I say, the difficulties springing from these minute differences in the sacred Historians, with regard to the precise time and place of Jesus's several appearances after his resurrection, would have vanished and disappeared; and the dignity of the Evidence for the Christian Faith would have been secured from the dishonour of its being forced to stoop to the low and trifling criticisms on words and phrases, often involved in dark and intricate nothings: then, I say, these Defenders would have seen that St. Paul hath chalked out a better and nobler, as well as shorter and clearer Demonstration of this important truth; who, when he had said, in the words of my Text, *If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins*, adds, *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept*. And having thus by *internal evidence* shewn the necessity of the Miracle, he realizes the fact *externally*, by a *cloud of witnesses*, but given with becoming dignity, in the gross,—“ He  
“ was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of  
“ above five hundred Brethren at once: of whom the greater part  
“ remain unto this present; but some are fallen asleep. After that  
“ he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles, &c.”

APPENDIX;



# A P P E N D I X;

C O N T A I N I N G

T W O C H A R I T Y - S E R M O N S

P U B L I S H E D B Y T H E A U T H O R ;

A N D

T H R E E S E R M O N S

O N D I F F E R E N T S U B J E C T S,

N E V E R B E F O R E P R I N T E D .



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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

THE GOVERNORS OF THE SMALL-POX HOSPITAL,  
IN MDCCLV.

(AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.)

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PSALM xli. 1, 2, 3.

BLESSED IS HE THAT CONSIDERETH THE POOR—THE LORD WILL  
STRENGTHEN HIM UPON THE BED OF LANGUISHING; THOU  
WILT MAKE ALL HIS BED IN HIS SICKNESS.

WHEN the observance of God's commands, under the *Jewish* Law, was rewarded with *temporal* blessings, the sanctions of that Law were so divinely adjusted, that the various duties, and the various rewards annexed unto them, had a beautiful analogy, and bore a fitting relation to one another.

Thus a zeal for the interests of their God and King was rewarded with the *possession of the promised land*: observance of the sabbatical rest, with *fertility and abundance*: duty and obedience to Parents,

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the

the immediate authors of our being, had the *promise of long life*: and pity and compassion to the Poor is here said, in my text, to bring down the extraordinary comfort and support of Heaven in our bodily infirmities, finely expressed, by *God's making all our bed in our sickness*: And how proper and adequate this reward is to the performance of the duty, we may understand by considering, that POVERTY is one continued *languishing and sickness*; under which the heart becomes faint, the spirits depressed, and the body in continual restlessness which gives no intermission from anxiety and pain. How then could the abundance of Divine Goodness more fitly reward him whose bounty ministers kindness and consolation to wretches languishing under extreme poverty, than by easing and refreshing their Comforter, when, by the general lot of humanity, he, in his turn, lies labouring under bodily infirmities?

Indeed both POVERTY and SICKNESS reduce humanity to such a state as serves to detect the miserable debility of our nature, and the perfect equality in wretchedness amongst all who partake of it; which the accidental circumstances of fortune in a few only disguise and varnish over for a time; and while health concurs with affluence to delude us into an opinion that we are placed above the common disasters of our species. But every fit of sickness dispels this gaudy vapour, and lays bare the helpless condition of humanity, when we are least able to endure the sight.

So powerful an inforcement to charity and compassion did the Law of *Moses* afford its followers! Nor are we to suspect that the Gospel of Jesus is less efficacious in its sanctions. For though that extraordinary Providence which administered temporal blessings, in so large a measure, to the *Jewish* people, has been long since withdrawn; yet we are not to think that God, in his present disposition of worldly matters, *leaves himself without a witness*; or that his gracious Providence does not incessantly interfere, though with less outward pomp, yet with no less real efficacy, to reward the good and to punish the wicked, even in this present life: For, as the apostle *Paul* may well be understood, *Godliness is profitable unto all things,*

*things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And if any virtuous practice has a better claim than other to the title of *Godliness*, it is charity and compassion to the Poor; in which we aim, though at infinite distance, to imitate the Creator in our care to ease and relieve the wants and distresses of his creatures.

I shall therefore beg leave to inforce this duty from the single consideration of my text, that charity and beneficence to the Poor are the surest means of alleviating the pains and miseries of a sick bed, by procuring the hand of God *to make all our bed in our sickness*: in which emphatic phrase the *Psalmist* alludes to that miserable circumstance of a sick-bed, a perpetual restlessness, which makes us throw our disquiet on the hardness of our bed or couch.

Of all the distressful calamities to which Man's life is subject, SICKNESS is the most afflictive. All the other disasters of humanity, such as captivity, persecution, exile, slighted affection, calumny, and slander, receive their sharpest slings from fashion, habit, and the unruly passions: and we have generally the cure, always the alleviation, within ourselves: constancy, patience, and the exercise of reason may subdue them; and an artful diversion of the mind to other objects easily evades their more violent attacks. But bodily infirmities, attended with pain and depression of spirits, are entirely out of our power to redress. They keep the mind irremissibly tied down to a contemplation of its miseries, without respite and without relief; while every tormenting pang becomes the dreadful monitor of our approaching dissolution. Wealth, power, wisdom, and the attachment of those connected in interest or friendship with us, may remove or alleviate the other calamities of life; but SICKNESS remains deaf and inexorable to all these powerful emollients. The Fever burns on; the Stone tears its way; and the Hætic continues to sap and undermine the fortress of life, regardless and in defiance of our friends, our patrons, and our physicians. Torment, distress, and anxious dread of the event, exclude all comfort and consolation. Nothing but the *Lord of Life* himself can aid us in this dread hour,

nothing but his Spirit can assist and support us in this mighty conflict. And the man whose lenient hand and sympathising heart has accustomed him to feel for the lesser distresses of his fellow-creatures, is, by the unerring word of truth, assured that he shall have this assistance, in his greatest. *The Lord (says my text) shall make all his bed in his sickness.*

This assistance shall be afforded him by different ways, and in different measures.

Oftentimes the hand of God will effect a speedy cure: either by so strongly supporting the mind as to lend its vigour to the body to throw off the malignity of the distemper; or by so powerfully enlightening the physician as to teach him to assist Nature in the recovery of itself; or, lastly, by putting some sovereign remedy in his way, whose specific virtue was ordained, and without his aid, to conquer the obstinacy of the distemper. The history of mankind is full of instances where this extraordinary relief hath been afforded: where the languor of the mind has been fortified; where the usual blindness of the physician has been removed; and where the most unpromising remedies have afforded an instantaneous cure.

And when, for the wise ends of Providence, whether physical or moral, the chronical disorder becomes incurable, or the malignant distemper proves unconquerable, *then* will great comfort and consolation be afforded to the charitable man, *upon his bed of languishing*; the hand of God will administer balms to his wounded spirit, and cordials to his weak and languishing body. At this time it is that the good man will most sensibly feel the comfort of that blessing promised in my text, to *have all his bed made in his sickness.*

But the strongest support the Spirit of God administers to such a one on his *bed of languishing*, is the testimony of a good conscience, which comes divinely impressed upon his mind in a lively review of his past good deeds, with a still more animating prospect of the approaching reward; the prospect of those eternal mansions just ready to open to him when the rage and malignity of perishable matter

matter shall have done its worst. Held up, and supported by this assistance, the torment of present pain subsides, and the terrors of approaching death recede before him. And now it is not He, but the World and all its miseries, which die away; while the Saint is reviving and springing up to life, and immortality. It is not the King of terrors he now approaches, but the Lord and Saviour of the world, who receives him with that gracious acceptance of, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.*

In conclusion, a greater excitement to our bounty, a greater encouragement to our compassion, could not possibly be afforded than the reward here annexed to our duty.

SICKNESS is an evil to which every individual of the human race is hourly exposed. All the other disasters of time or fortune, men may flatter themselves by their situations to escape. Wealth secures them from want and penury; Power, from insult or oppression; but no advantages of station can secure them from sickness and disease. Nay, those very advantages, by inducing evil habits, do but the more contribute to hasten the mischief, and to render it inveterate. What encouragement to our duty, therefore, can equal that which promises relief in those distresses, the most intolerable in themselves, to our nature most obnoxious, and which no circumstances of fortune can either prevent or redress?

Nor is the reward less adapted to the state and condition of those to whom it is afforded. It is addressed to the rich and powerful, to those who are best able to relieve penury and distress. But amongst those it is, that LUXURY, the parent of Disease, makes its greatest ravages. So that if the great were to chuse their own reward, they could not fix on any thing of more peculiar use or benefit to themselves.

But if Providence so largely rewards the kind relief of simple Poverty, How will the blessing be accumulated on him who still more humanely seeks out for the object of his benevolence from  
amongst

amongst those who, together with their poverty, lie oppressed under the additional load of sickness and disease ! Here he will be sure to find the mercy, not only returned in kind, but returned in more abundant measure ; and while he is so divinely intent to ease the poor man's *bed of languishing*, he is preparing for his own ; and decking it up, to become, even when pain and torment threaten most, a bed of ease and rest unto him.

And the well-advised believer who considers that the Prophet annexes the blessing in my text, not so much to the bounty of the hand, as to the deliberate benevolence of the heart, —*blest is he that CONSIDERETH the Poor*—will be very careful in seeking out, and exploring the most proper Object of his charity.

But was such a one to seek through the world for this purpose, it would be hard to find a subject, in all its circumstances, so eligible as the excellent Establishment for the relief of distressful poverty, which I am now entrusted to recommend to your protection.

For the objects it comprehends and is confined to, are those who labour under one of the most dangerous and afflictive maladies, to which human nature is exposed : not of such as are acquired by our follies or our vices ; nor yet of such as any degree of care and circumspection can avoid. A mischief rising, not from within, by humours let loose by intemperance, which destroy the balance between the fluids and solids ; nor yet from without, by the contagion of unlawful commerce, which corrupts and viciates the whole frame ; but a kind of pestilence that resides and reigns amongst us through the malignity of infectious bodies or a corrupted atmosphere, or perhaps of both : and is what, in the humble language of piety, we call the *band of God*. In a word, a calamity, where there is not one circumstance to abate our compassion, and a thousand to excite and to support it.

Such is the nature of the first, and, as I suppose, the original part of this noble Charity.

But

But to those generous minds who are more intent upon public than private interests, and who think the duty of universal benevolence better discharged by beginning with generals, and descending to particulars, than by rising from particular to general good, I would in a more especial manner recommend the other part. For they are distinct; and the kind encourager of this Charity may direct his beneficence to either part as he is most disposed.

The part I mean is that for INOCULATION: the safety and prodigious benefit of which has been long experienced and fully confirmed by careful applications of it on the Rich; and is now, by the glorious humanity of this Establishment, extended to the Poor.

And as it is INFANCY and YOUTH, amongst which this dire calamity makes its greatest havock, the protecting these stages of life from its ravages, is the most essential service to the Public. For, according to a famous saying of Antiquity, *The loss of Youth is to the State, what the loss of Spring is to the Year*; the cutting off that flowery season which prepares Nature for the fruits and harvests that are to follow from it.

Indeed, if what we are told of the original of this happy invention be true, it is not so much humanity and charity, as gratitude and a debt, to put the Poor into a capacity of enjoying this blessing. For from the Poor, it seems, the Rich first received it: indeed from a people which may not improperly be called a *Nation of Poor*; namely, the *Georgians* and *Circassians*, the most miserable of enslaved Provinces; as lying in the frontier of two great despotic Empires.

But those of you, my Brethren, of still more enlarged conceptions, who delight in rooting out SUPERSTITION, as the bane not only of Religion, but of Civil life likewise, will have here a noble occasion to exercise the generosity of your natures. For, by what strange fate it is I know not; but so it has happened, that, at a time when *Religion* has lost almost all its influence on the minds  
of

of the People, yet *Superstition* still keeps its hold; and this most beneficial practice is regarded with abhorrence by them, as a kind of impiety, a tempting God, and mistrusting his general Providence. Now the best confutation of such monstrous absurdities is the success of the practice, in which (while twenty or thirty die out of one hundred and fifty, who contract the distemper in a natural way), only **THREE** \* out of Six Hundred and Ninety-three which have been inoculated since the erection of the Hospital have fallen under it.

Give me leave to add another circumstance, which seems to be of weight to excite the attention of the well-disposed: and that is, that as its funds consist chiefly of annual and voluntary contributions, it will always need the repeated assistance of the benevolent. And this circumstance, which awakes charity, will serve to fix and determine the object of our choice; for we may be reasonably well assured, that while a public Charity remains in this condition, it will be carefully and honestly administered; that which makes its existence precarious, securing its well-being. The Governors of Hospitals which so subsist, being rather Stewards than Trustees to the Public. And to what scandalous abuses of trust largely endowed Hospitals, whether of new or old foundation, have been exposed, is too well known to be further insisted on in this place, where the subject is not concerning their reformation.

Indeed, it appears almost superfluous to urge this consideration. For whoever casts his eye on the list of illustrious and honourable Names in the government and direction of this CHARITY will be convinced, that there needs no other favourable circumstance to preserve it under a prudent, diligent, and faithful administration, than the nobleness and generosity of their own respectable Characters.

\* Of those **THREE**, *one* died by *Worms*, though he was not suspected to be so disordered when inoculated; and *another* was apprehended to have first caught the Distemper in the *Natural Way*.

Permit me therefore, my Brethren, as I am directed by my office, and reminded by my text, to charge you who are rich in this world, that you be **READY** to give, and **GLAD** to distribute; laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. *Amen.*

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A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

THE GOVERNORS OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL,  
IN MDCCLXVII.

(AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.)

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I CORINTH. Ch. XIII. ver. 13.

—THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.

**I** SHALL not, at present, stay to consider the grounds and reasons of the preference here given to CHARITY above all the other Christian Virtues. Nor is such an enquiry needful, since the obvious nature of *Charity*, as it signifies UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE, shews, that it must needs be at the head of human Virtues; *Universal Benevolence*, which prefers the good of the Whole to any of its parts, being of the essence, as it is the end of all Virtue.

If

If I should venture to prelude what I have to say on this occasion, by observing, that *Benevolence* is the characteristic Virtue of **ENGLISHMEN**, I might, perhaps, be thought to flatter a People now fatally over-run with Vice and Impiety.

But justice is due to all ; and may be paid with honour as well to ourselves as to others ; as well to our Friends as our Enemies. So that, with a fair boast, I may repeat it, “ This sovereign Virtue is native to us, and our own ; and the fantastic Follies, now most in fashion, are of foreign growth, and imported from abroad.”

As soon as ever England had broken asunder the chains of Ignorance and Superstition, our National Benevolence began to shew itself, and kindle into warmth. The objects most intimate and pressing, naturally became, in the order they arose, the successive care of this sovereign Virtue.

Hence it was that the interests of **PURE RELIGION**, the thing most productive of human happiness, first awakened, and continued to excite our whole attention ; till we had thoroughly defecated the celestial fountain of **FAITH** from the poisonous dregs of **ROME**. This noble labour occupied English Charity throughout the whole period between **EDWARD** the VIth and **JAMES** the Ist.

The next object of this benevolent spirit was **CIVIL LIBERTY**, the Daughter of *Religion*, and, after her, the most prolific of earthly blessings. For this, the generous Englishman long toiled : and, by a vast expence of blood and treasure, at length secured for his Posterity—For his Posterity do I say ? Or should I not rather say, for the human race in general ? This glorious struggle for the service of mankind began under **JAMES** the Ist, continued long, and was happily ended under **WILLIAM** the IIIrd.

Our native Benevolence having thus provided for the **WHOLE**, in the security of those two capital blessings, **RELIGION** and **CIVIL LIBERTY**, now turned its gracious aspect upon the **PARTS** : and the **SUFFERING POOR**, ordained by Providence to bear the heaviest burthens of society, engaged their first and principal concern.

Then *Charity-Schools* for the education of youth ; *Infirmaries* for the relief of the diseased ; and *Hospitals* for the solace of old age ; soon overspread this happy Island. And in these beneficent labours hath this Godlike Spirit been employed from the reign of William III. to this present time.

Thus uniformly hath our native Charity kept opening and widening through several ages, till it embraced and took in all the great Objects of Universal Benevolence.

How perfectly this spirit got possession of the frame and faculties of Englishmen, may be seen from the most trifling, as well as from the most important circumstances. We may collect it from the very words of our language : ALMS-GIVING having, by a conversion of terms peculiar to the English tongue, usurped the very name of CHARITY. A plain indication of what our Forefathers felt to be the *motive*, and what they understood to be the *genuine motive* of ALMS-GIVING.

One principal branch of this sublime Virtue, which I am now intrusted to recommend to your favour and protection, are public Infirmaries for the disabled Poor.

But as a retentive purse is ever ingenious in starting objections, sometimes to the *manner of giving*, and sometimes, again, to the *utility of the gift* ; it will be incumbent on me previously to remove both the one and the other of these obstructions.

We will begin with certain religious scruples to public and open contributions of this nature, from a text of Scripture ill understood, and worse applied. *When thou doest thine alms* (says our Blessed Master) *do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do—but when thou doest thine Alms, let it be in secret.*—Now this precept is greatly mistaken when it is understood to be an *exclusive direction*, how and in what manner the duty of alms-giving should be performed ; as that its merit consisted in its being *done in secret* ; and that it lost all its virtue when it came to the general knowledge of men. On the contrary, the Precept is only an *information* (given, indeed, by way of *direction*) concerning the *disposition of mind*, necessary

cessary to make the Giver's Alms acceptable before God. The true meaning of the text being precisely this—" *Be not as the Hypocrites, who, devoid of all benevolence, and actuated either by superstition, self-interest, or vain-glory, or perhaps by all of them together, seek only the praise of men; and therefore sound a Trumpet before them, to proclaim their alms. But when thou addressest thyself to the performance of this duty, let UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE possess thy soul, as knowing that though thou bestow all thy goods to FEED THE POOR, and have not CHARITY, it profiteth thee nothing: and knowing this, thou will naturally and without affectation (when thou art not called upon, on a proper occasion like the present, to let thy light shine before men) do thine alms in secret. Not that doing them openly or in secret makes any difference in the merit of the action itself; but that the sound of a flawed and faulty heart generally accompanies the Trumpeter's proclamation; while the action of the silent giver modestly whispers the integrity of his purpose. Otherwise, when UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE hath got possession of the heart, then Alms done openly must needs be best pleasing to our Heavenly Father; as the Example spreads abroad the Spirit of Benevolence, and each open giver catches the sacred fire from another, till the whole Offering arises in one pure blaze of Charity, an Holocaust of the pious Heart to Heaven: as on the other hand, when it is superstition only which stimulates thee to this paltry sacrifice of the praise of men, thou wilt only add to the nullity of the action, the offence which accompanies its nature.*"

The second objection is of a civil nature; *the legal provision for the Poor* is objected to the necessity, if not to the utility, of these new and *voluntary establishments*.

But when the origin of that *provision* comes to be considered, it may possibly be seen, that these *new establishments* are the best means of removing the inconveniencies, which, in a course of time, have arisen from that beneficent, but ill-judged policy, of *providing for the Poor by law*.

Before

Before the times of common sense and Reformation, a still-increasing superstition had brought an immensely disproportioned share of the landed property into the hands of Churchmen and other religious. But lands in *Mortmain* are a dead weight upon Commerce; which rarely rises, and can never flourish under so unfavourable an aspect. This, for many ages, filled the nation with Beggars. Indeed *begging* was the only Commerce it had. And it throve so well, and grew so fashionable, that whole *Orders of Religious*, when they had beggared others, turned beggars themselves; and, after despoiling the rich, did not blush to share the Alms with the Poor.

In this general distress, the wealthy Monasteries opened their gates to a miserable starving people: who, being first reduced to indigence by the *Religious*, were afterwards supported by them in idleness; till an *Abbey-Lubber* became the common name for one of the Monastic Leeches. And while Laymen seemed to have forgotten the plainest civil truth, *that Necessity was the mother of Invention*, Churchmen were successfully inculcating the greatest of religious absurdities, *that Ignorance was the mother of Devotion*.

When HENRY VIII. dissolved the *religious Houses*, and, by that means, restored civil Property to the uses of Commerce, the immense revenues which came into the Exchequer were soon dispersed and dissipated; partly in support of the measures of that daring Revolution; partly in the ill-judged projects of his childish ambition; and in part, in the indulgence of his luxurious pleasures.

But so clamorous were those Drones, the *Abbey-Lubbers*, on the destruction of their hives, that the Crown found it necessary to insert in its grants of alienation, an express condition of *Hospitality*; which had no lasting effects; for now, the emancipated Church-estates perpetually changing hands, the charge upon them of Hospitality was soon forgotten or disregarded.

In the mean time COMMERCE, under the genial warmth of *Property in motion*, began to make its first struggles for birth. Trading  
Companies

Companies were formed; distant Voyages were attempted, and new Worlds discovered.

But Infant-Commerce is weak and feeble; and its hands unapt for Manufactures, the perennial source of national wealth: so that still a numerous *Poor* remained untaught and unfed.

The glorious administration of a Woman, who took up her father's reins, after they had been slackened, first by Faction, and then by a returning Superstition, was intent to supply both these wants by Law. But unskilful measures in providing against distresses, soon took off the edge of Industry. And the law, which quarters the Poor on their several parishes, grew, in time, so intolerable a burthen, both on the landed and commercial Interests, and so difficult to be shaken off, that the Legislature hath now employed more than an age, in seeking for the proper remedy, and hath not yet found it.

In this *inability*, the best relief, though it can operate but slowly, are these voluntary new-erected *Establisments*, entirely formed and addressed to encourage *industry*, by providing a speedy cure to the maladies and disasters of the disabled Poor. From whence it appears, that the *legal provision* is so far from being an objection to their continuance, that an increase of them is the only means we have, at present, of putting some stop to the growing mischiefs of that *provision*.

Thus we see how civil Policy and religious Charity concur in favour of these *new Establisments in general*. What remains, is only to recommend to you the object of our present care; an Establishment, that (like all other of the same kind which have the Poor for their subject) doth honour to humanity: and, by the peculiar nature of the Institution, hath the advantage of being most beneficial to a commercial people; as taking in all *Labourers for the Public*, whether by SEA or LAND; whether disabled by accidents, or debilitated by disease. For, against these necessary Servants of Society all the elements seem to have conspired. They seize the *Workman and Artificer* at home; sometimes by the baleful qualities  
of

of the materials on which he is employed ; sometimes by the blasting heats of furnaces and forges, in the midst of which, the process of his artful industry, in giving form and fashion to those tortured materials, is carried on ; and sometimes again by the damps of mines, and the rotten exhalations of woods and marshes, to which, in his useful labours, he is unhappily confined. They pursue the *Sailor* abroad ; and the very air necessary to a prosperous course, becomes destructive of his constitution ; now by a load of corrosive salts ; and now again, by the change of climates in extreme, made unfit for respiration.

Such are the objects of this noble Charity ; to which no motives of recommendation, whether divine or human, can be wanting.

I. If we seek them in RELIGION, Solomon is at hand to tell us, *That whoſo hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord\** : And a wiser than he assures us, that what we do to our distressed brethren, will be reckoned as done to himself : Our gracious Master being pleased to exalt and enoble ALMS *to the Poor* into OBLATIONS *to himself*.

And though, from the attributes of the Godhead in general, we can well account for so honoured an acceptance of human alms ; yet there is another reason, peculiarly relative to the present dispensations of Providence, which will explain the high encomium here bestowed upon this Virtue.

In social and civil life, under Government political, (which God declares † to be his *ordinance* as well as man's) the far greater part of those whereof it is composed are, by the inevitable order of things, condemned to a state of labour, distress, and penury. The Common Father of mankind has therefore graciously condescended to consider himself as responsible for the relief and support of all in this humble station ; and, on this account, hath earnestly and particularly recommended them to the care and protection of the *Rich* ; to whom, as to the *Stewards* of his bounty and abundance, he hath

\* Prov. xix. 17.

† Rom. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

*intrusted,*

*intrusted*, rather than *given*, the goods of this world : Goods, which God, at first, created un-appropriate ; and NATURE threw in common to all her children.

Indeed, we can never sufficiently adore the Father of mercy, who, in the tenderness of his Providence, hath thus set to his own account, whatever is disbursed by these his *Stewards*, upon such, who by reason of the wants which *his own Ordinance* hath occasioned, are under his more especial care and protection.

II. If, in the second place, we seek our motives in the bosom of HUMAN VIRTUE, these *Stewards* of God's bounty, the *Rich*, will never want reasons of *humanity* and *justice* towards their Brethren, as well as of *piety* and *gratitude* to their Lord and Benefactor, for the ready and chearful discharge of their *Trust* ; when they consider that the lower ranks in society (on whom distress and penury are fatally entailed) had this hard measure assigned unto them by Providence, that the *Rich* might enjoy the Blessings of social life in greater plenty, in a more improved condition, and in fuller security, than they were even at first poured out on man from the lap of God's prolific Substitute, NATURE : For, to the toil, the ingenuity, and the ready habits of the hardy *Poor*, both by land and water, are owing the abundance and stability of those *artificial accommodations* which society procures. So that were it not for the constant toil of the Labourer, the Sailor, and the Artificer, the man most indulged in the wanton gifts of fortune would soon find himself, in the midst of all his proud connexions, as ill accommodated in his person and in his domestic, as a savage Indian Chief amidst his wastes and desarts.

III. But, thirdly, if neither piety, humanity, nor even the interests of luxury and commerce, have force sufficient to open either our hearts or hands in favour of those who impair their health and shorten their lives in destructive toil and hazardous adventures, to provide for our ease and pleasures ; we should consider, how our very SAFETY (in the peace and order of society) is concerned in this soothing relief, thus beneficently afforded to the poor distressed.

One of the most marvellous circumstances in the life of that inconsequent prodigious creature, Man, is, that the Populace in all governments can feel, and yet do so patiently abide and groan under toil and penury ; distresses sustained by the *Many*, for the support of the *Few* in insolence and riot.

The force of human laws alone is insufficient to account for this dead calm in the most furious and impatient of all wild creatures, *Man in distress*.

The Populace were never able to comprehend either the *nature* or *end* of National Laws ; their *use* to the whole, or their *necessity* to the several parts ; and, therefore, could have no forceable inducement to pay them reverence. On the other hand, they were never so stupid as not to understand that *human laws*, like a thread of flax before a flame, vanish and disappear before popular commotions.

What is it, then, do you ask, that hath so long restrained this fierce and agonizing part of Civil Society, in which all power really resides ; and from which it is fetched, by their Rulers, to be employed against themselves ? What is it, do you ask, that first tamed brutal Man, and disarmed the fury of an enraged multitude, and hath ever since restrained them, while murmuring under so unequal a partition of the free blessings of Providence, from using this power in their own quarrel, to shake off their burthens, to reassume the *Commonalty of Nature*, to level all the boundaries of Property, and throw social life into disorder and confusion ? What could it be, but the powerful charm of RELIGION ? A charm which makes the Laws sacred, and the Supreme Magistrate adored.

But now, RELIGION having lost its hold on the Populace, (amongst whom a new set of Opinions hath been inculcated to encourage their practices) some *Succedaneum* will be found necessary to supply its place, till it can regain its usual force. And what so natural and efficacious as these NEW ESTABLISHMENTS, the first-fruits of CHARITY ; which, in the absence of FAITH, and during the loss of HOPE, may supply their place, and restrain the madness of a desperate people ? For while they see the higher stations

in society thus condescending, and even proud to discharge the office of their Guardians, zealous to make their distressed condition sit as easy on them as the nature of Society will permit, and the tenderest pity can procure, the Commonalty will be reconciled to their station; and, though neither oversatisfied, nor perhaps overgrateful, will yet cease, in any turbulent way, to malign the happier lot of those who bend their care, and employ their wealth, to drive away want and distress from the habitations of the **INDUSTRIOUS POOR.**

Now, would we regard our *new Establishments* in this view, we should have a sufficient answer to the *Objection* arising from the growing multiplicity of them.

They are, we have shewn, a *Succedaneum*, and the only one we have, to that great bond of Society, **RELIGION**: a *partial* extension of it, therefore, will hardly be sufficient. The Charity must spread and enlarge itself till it encompasses the *whole*, in order to enable it to supply the place of that natural and more efficacious *tye*, **RELIGION**, now loosened in most parts, but quite shattered and broken in that where its strength was most needful, I mean, the *Populace*.

But this is not all: these Establishments *abound* in their uses; not only such as are public and general, which have been already explained, but private and particular likewise, as we shall see.

Where every good man is his own almoner, compassion is always readier to bestow, than prudence and circumspection to distribute. It relieves labouring humanity when we ease an object in distress. But the judgment (whenever we condescend to be governed by it) always with-holds its assent, till the object appear *worthy* our care and attention. And were the judgment more consulted, we should not, at this very hour, have virtuous compassion, by a false pity, so much abused, as to become, instead of a blessing, a public mischief; as it is in the relief of common-vagrants and street-beggars.

The charitable rich man is, as we have said, the *chosen Substitute* of God; to supply what, in the common course of his Providence, hath, for wise reasons, been left imperfect and deficient. It is of his

office, therefore, to satisfy justice and mercy, in the support of distressed Virtue, before he allows the tender sentiments of a constitutional compassion, to administer to the alleviation of suffering vice.

For these reasons, we shall, if we be wise as well as pious, make these *public Charities* the Treasuries of our private Alms; as being well assured, that what is there lodged will be dispensed in such a manner as may best advance the national interests; may best serve the sacred ends of Religion; and best satisfy our own bountiful and humane disposition

And if, amongst these various *Establishments*, there be some whose principal objects are the wretches, who, by their vicious and intemperate appetites, have brought disease and misery on themselves, even these may fairly plead our pity, since they caught the infection of their immoral habits from the depraved Example of their *Betters*.

But the distinguished *Charity*, which I am at this time to recommend to your protection, is of a very different nature. It is, in a word, the most humane, most useful, and most deserving the attention of all good men; as it is best calculated to produce the satisfactory and salutary purposes which the wisest *Establishments* of this kind profess to aim at.

A still further inducement to support these Charities is the present state of the *Public Manners*; which are seen by all to be in so profligate a condition, as to require some atonement for insulted Truth and violated Virtue. The most natural indeed, and efficacious, is the amendment of our lives and reformation of our vicious habits: yet, while that is working (and it is always a work of time) as there is apparent need of some intermediate deprecation of the wrath of Heaven, we are unable to conceive any more acceptable service to the God of mercy and compassion, than the relief of his favourite Creature, *Man*, struggling under the rigour of his wise and necessary Dispensation.

But then let no superstitious fancies, that our habitual vices may be indulged under the ample cloak of Charity, defeat these hopeful means of a beginning reconciliation with our offended Master. For  
though

though *Charity or benevolence* hides the faults of *others* from the severity of our censure, yet *Charity or Alms-giving* is totally unable to conceal *our own* from the observance of our all righteous Judge. Indeed, the only cover for these, or, to speak more properly, the discharge of all their stains, is FAITH, is the BLOOD of Christ, working with *repentance* towards God. When FAITH, when the BLOOD of Christ, hath thus done its perfect work, and brought forth *repentance*, then we shall not be mistaken in concluding that one of the noblest fruits of *repentance* is of the growth of THIS ESTABLISHMENT ; in giving covering to the naked, in dispensing food to the hungry, in pouring balm into the wounds of the afflicted, and administering cordials to the sick and languishing.

May this be the constant employment of this humane *Establishment* ! and may the God of all Mercies prosper its generous Undertakings !

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*Christ's Legacy of Peace to his Disciples.*

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A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

T H E K I N G,  
AT KENSINGTON, OCTOBER 27, 1754.

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GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, Chap. XIV. Ver. 27.

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU:  
NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.

**T**HE blessed Founder of our Faith, to shew us the superiority of the advantages which Religion offers to his faithful Servants, bequeaths to them this inestimable Legacy of *Peace*.

All temporal good results into one or other of these two blessings, *Pleasure* and *Peace*. The *first* more strongly solicites the *sensual* appetites; the *second*, the *intellectual*: *That* strikes more forceably  
on

on the *fancy*; *this*, on the *understanding*. *Pleasure* is the early and single object of the young and dissipated: but *Peace* is the harbour of the wise and experienced. In *Pleasure* the pursuit of happiness is generally *begun*; and in *Peace*, the pursuit of it as generally *ends*. For the *organs of sense*, being the instruments through which *pleasure* is conveyed for the mind's enjoyment, they are soon put out of order, by excess; or rendered unfit by long use, for the discharge of that part of their functions. For by abuse, or unremitting use, the body becomes so disordered, or the mind so insensible, that *pleasure* degenerates into pain, disgust, or indifference. And the Mind, fatigued in the fruitless search of happiness, finds at length that it is no where to be had but in *peace* and tranquillity of mind.—And in the *enjoyment of peace*, the mind becomes gradually strengthened and fortified; as in the *exercise of pleasure*, it is more and more debilitated and broken.

For *peace* repairs all the faculties of the mind, just as *pleasure* wears them out. And age and time, which take off all the vigorous sense of pleasure, add still a new taste and relish to inward *peace*: The mind which, during its hurry and violent attachment to pleasure, overlooked the sweet allurements of *peace*, being, by the subdual or subsidence of the more violent passions, now become attentive to, and sensible of, the soft and gentle impressions of tranquillity.

Our blessed Master, therefore, could not bestow, at his departure, a richer Legacy on his faithful Servants, than this of *inward peace*: the security and reward of Virtue, and the balm of the *wounded spirit*.

But as the *Giver*, so was the *gift*, *Divine*. And though a *temporal* good, yet so purified, ennobled, and exalted by Religion, as to accompany us through these dark regions of sorrow (over which it throws a constant sunshine) and to pass with us to the celestial realms of joy and immortality.

But there is an Impostor, a Counterfeit of this *Peace*, which restless and overburthened mortals are always seeking for in vain.

This

This Phantom is ever flitting before us, and assuming a variety of Forms to engage the pursuit of the mistaken follower ; who, when he thinks to hold her in his grasp, finds nothing but empty air ; though Fancy have embodied it in all the specious shapes of *wisdom, power, wealth, reputation, glory*, and every gaudy Form, which draws deluded mortals to seek for *peace* amidst their *miseries*.

To these Counterfeits, our gracious Master alludes, when he distinguishes the *genuine blessing*, which is his gift, from these wretched inventions of Men. *My Peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you :* Words that imply an immense difference both in the GIFT and in the GIVER.

Let us first then consider, What that *Peace* is which the World promises to bestow upon its Votaries ; and where it is to be found.

The *World* would think it strange, if we should deny, that *peace* is to be found in what it calls *wisdom, power, wealth, reputation, and glory*. Yet it is certain, that, when sought for amongst *any* or *all* of these, no more is to be found than the mere *shadow* of peace ; and, generally, not *so much*.

Human *wisdom*, or science, bids fairest to content the *reasonable mind* ; because the object of knowledge is *nature*, and the object of the fairest branches of knowledge, *human nature*, whose perceptions and ideas it attempts to trace ; and whose passions and appetites it pretends to regulate : yet, wanting those principles, discoverable only by *Revelation*, which teaches man's *true end*, and which excites his endeavours to the attainment of it, human knowledge only fluctuates in the *head*, but comes not near the *heart*, where peace of mind is engendered. While the whole state of the *Sage* or *Man of Wisdom*, though set off with all the trappings and gaudy equipage of Letters, is a state of anxiety and disquiet, of doubt and disappointment.

If *peace* then keep at such a distance from worldly wisdom, we can hardly think she will become more intimate with *Power* and *Grandeur* : where, instead of restraint on the passions and appetites (which *Wisdom* attempts) every thing concurs to raise and inflame them.

them. Now inordinate and irregular appetites are the immediate *bane* and destruction of *inward peace*.

But it is not only from *within*, but from *without* also, that *peace* is violated by *power*. In the pursuit of *Wisdom* all our Concurrents are our Assistants, and sometimes our Guides and Directors. And every Rival's acquisition is an addition to our own store. But in the pursuits of *power* it is just the contrary: All our Concurrents are our Enemies: every advantage of theirs throws *us* further back from the point we had in view: and *their* successes prove fatal to our own projects. For *corporeal* good is, in this, essentially different from *mental*; it lessens by communicating, and suffers an exclusive appropriation. And as the rivalry for corporeal advantages is, for this reason, as well as others, always more violent and constant; the Candidate for *power* has generally but a small share of *peace*: for the same struggle continues as constantly, and often as violently, *after* the acquisition of Power as *during* the pursuit of it.

*Riches*, the next pretended means of *Peace*, are still less efficacious to procure us this blessing.—If wealth be attended with the avarice of *hoarding*, it so narrows and contracts the mind as not to leave sufficient entrance to *Peace*; or at least that entrance is so guarded by *anxiety* for the present, *fearful apprehensions* of the future, and *mistrust* of every thing about us, that *Peace* flies frightened from so inhospitable a dwelling.

And if the rich man *employs* his wealth, as wealth is *commonly employed*, it brings on a large train of uneasy wants, and unruly appetites; which, as oft as they are relieved, are succeeded, in an endless succession, by *new wants* and *returning appetites*; every one more absurd and fantastic, more mischievous and unnatural, than the other. So that there is no interval for *peace* to get footing in a mind so agitated, distracted, and disappointed, by the *jolicitation*, the *variety*, and the *emptiness* of its objects.

But it will be said, that *fame and glory*, sure, if nothing else, will amply afford this *peace*. And, indeed, if any worldly Charm could soothe and lull the soul into this sweet Elysium, it must be the sense

of this high prerogative of humanity. And it will be owned, that as the other advantages tend to *contract* and *narrow* the mind, so *Glory* as naturally *dilates* and *enlarges* it; and, by that means, prepares and fits it for the reception of this soft felicity: For all *perturbations* arise from the *uneasy* narrowing the mind by *selfishness*.

Yet if we consider how *worldly fame and glory* are commonly acquired, we shall find, that there are some circumstances attending it, which must for ever keep peace a *Stranger*, or at least a very *precarious* Guest.

*Eloquence, Civil Policy, and Military Honours*, are the three great entrances to *Glory*. Yet how oft is the one employed in defence of falsehood and wrong; the other in the arts of circumvention; and the third amidst the horrors of unjust conquest? But these matters are best left to every man's particular meditation.

On the whole, we see what a delusion it is, which the world presents unto us, when it pretends to give us that greatest blessing here below, *inward peace*.

But as empty, and as *trifling* as the *present* is, even under its *best* form, it becomes still more worthless by the *caprice* and *injustice* of the *Giver*.

For these advantages, by which peace is supposed to be obtained, the World distributes with such injustice, with so little regard to true merit, that we generally find them shared (indeed not equally) by the worthless and by the deserving. Nor is there less caprice and inconstancy in the *continuance* of the world's favours: which, as it often gives without desert, as often resumes and takes away without cause. So that, even though *peace of mind* were indeed dependent on its smiles, the possession of this *peace* would be the most *precarious* of all things.

The Sages of Antiquity, who made the most diligent enquiry after this *peace*, were forced at last to confess this supreme blessing of humanity was not to be found without the aid of some *Celestial Guide*.

At that juncture, when the Guide was seen to be most wanted, he was sent by our Almighty Father, with all the heavenly attributes of *Grace* and *Peace*; who, having compleated his ordained Ministry; to prepare his followers for the reception of this gift, and to direct them how to preserve and improve it, when it was bestowed, left them with the divine farewell of my text: *Peace I leave with you: my Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

This *peace* consists in a full and pleasing consciousness of pardon and restoration to God's favour, through the blood of his Son, on our sincere repentance.

The immediate Giver of this Peace is the *Holy Spirit*. Hence, in reference to the *mysterious conveyance*, and the *supernatural fruits* of the Gift, it is called a *peace that passeth all understanding*. That is, such a *peace* as humanity is not able to procure for itself; or to preserve when procured, without the assisting grace of God's Holy Spirit.

And now we may be able to see the immense difference there is between this *peace*, and that which the world pretends to give, both in its *nature* and *duration*.

The Passions and Appetites are the deadly bane to all tranquillity of mind: and these, *this peace* totally subdues, by submitting *our will* to the *will of God*. In the mean time, our full assurance of *favour with him, our supreme good*, fills up the *great void* of the mind; which now enjoys, and is greatly affected with nothing but its own conscious content, tranquillity, and joy.

Again, this solid blessing is given, not as the world pretends to give its wretched Counterfeits; that is, *capriciously, unjustly, or precariously*.

As this *Peace* dwells only in the mind purified by the love of God and Man, and hatred of iniquity; so while the mind continues in that state, its *peace* is as lasting and solid as the foundations of the earth.

## 524 SERMONS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

And whatever casual pollution the good man may contract by presumption, negligence, or commerce with an evil World, which may abate or disorder *inward peace* ; For this, the Gracious Giver has contrived an instant and efficacious remedy, *sincere repentance* : by which all the breaches in our peace are repaired, and the heavenly tranquillity of mind restored to its full vigour, through the *mediation* of our blessed *Lord and Redeemer* ;—to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all glory for evermore.

*Iniquity*

*Iniquity the Cause of Unbelief.*

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

L I N C O L N ' S I N N ,

NOVEMBER 11, 1759.

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ST. MATT. Chap. XXIV. Ver. 12.

AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY  
SHALL WAX COLD.

THESE words are to be found in the famous Prophecy of Jcfus, in which the predictions of his *first* coming to judge the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and his *second* coming to judge mankind, in the destruction of the World and renovation of all things, are interwoven with one another.

And

And in these words is foretold that general apostacy from the *Faith*, of which the Sacred Writers have so frequently forewarned the faithful, as the characteristic mark of the *latter times*—*The love of many* [the adherence of the greater part to the Faith] *shall wax cold*: The *cause* of this apostacy is foretold likewise, *because Iniquity shall abound*.

This melancholy but important truth may be supported by considerations drawn, 1st, from the *nature of things*; and, 2dly, from the experience of our own times.

Though nothing be more common than to see men's opinions and practices at variance; because the *judgment* draws one way, and the *passions* another; and because, generally, men are neither masters of one nor of the other, to take them up and lay them down at pleasure; and so have it not in their power to suit their opinions to their practices, or their practices to their opinions, as they see fit: yet this contrariety and opposition is a very uneasy situation; and the more so, from the difficulty of removing it. Hence the various arts and contrivances of the *wicked heart*, to delude itself, in procuring a set of principles, that may support Men, at least give them no uneasiness, in their practices.

But if the received principles or opinions (such as those of the Christian faith) not only shew the falsehood, the folly, and the absurdity of vice; and that it is not only destructive of our rational nature *here*, but of our very being *hereafter*; then the wicked man, who is resolved not to part with his vices, and yet finds himself crossed and disturbed by these opinions, which he had imbibed in his education, and afterwards approved in his judgment, will never rest till he has *perverted* that judgment, by sophistical reasonings against the *truth* of his opinions. And sophistical reasonings, at best, even when seconded by a willing mind, always carrying their suspicions along with them, the self-deluded victim to his vices is still for trying their force upon his acquaintance, in order to establish them more firmly in himself. Hence that preposterous zeal, observed in modern unbelievers, for making converts; which has  
always

always appeared to pious observers so extremely monstrous ; but which, we find, has a very obvious cause in the very nature of infidelity itself.

Thus we see, how truly *Iniquity* is assigned as the *cause* of that general *apostacy* from the Christian faith, predicted to be the Character of these latter days. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

And here, before I proceed to my second head, it may not be amiss to observe, how much this check upon vice is to the honour of the Christian Faith ; a check so great, that vice cannot proceed in its course, till this obstruction to it be removed. In the Pagan and Mahometan Religions, both of antient and modern times, wicked men were never under this necessity : nor have we ever heard that they quarreled with their Religion, because they wanted to enjoy their vices in peace. Their opinions and practices subsisted together in a very friendly manner. And we find, much nearer home, that those men who have quarreled with their baptismal Faith for the sake of their vices, profess themselves to be the followers of *natural Religion* ; which being what each man pleases to make it, it is very easy for them to prevent its becoming *troublesome* to their vices ; and is therefore a very *commodious*, as it is a very *reputable*, profession of Religion.

But I now anticipate the subject of the second head I proposed to speak to in support and explanation of my text ; which was, that the experience of the present times amply confirms its truth, that *abounding of iniquity* is the true cause *why the love of many* for the Christian faith *is waxed cold* : or of that general defection from Christianity which has now spread itself throughout all orders and degrees of men.

A mere *general view* of the state of things is alone sufficient to evidence this truth. When was there so great a defection from the Religion of our Forefathers ? and when did profligate iniquity so much abound ? The estimate of the *quantity* of national vice is indeed hard to make. But this we may be assured of, that when

*Vice*

*Vice* stalks triumphant, and without disguise; when apologies are made for the national benefits resulting from private vices; and when it is openly maintained that Government cannot be carried on without *corruption*; we may be assured, that *Vice* has spread more generally, and has taken deeper root, than while it sneaked about in disguise; while it denied its Parentage, and pretended to be related to *Virtue*.

But we have a surer evidence of the truth of my text. We need but look about us and consider who have been the most zealous propagators of Infidelity throughout this present Century; and who have been their most devoted followers; and we shall find that both have been as notorious (whether in high stations or in low) for vice and *corruption*, as for the profligate principles of *unbelief*. So that there was small danger of being mistaken, when we *saw* a man *glorying* in his Iniquities, to conclude that he was a *Rogue upon Principle*, that is, a Freethinker: as on the other hand, when we *heard* a man profess his disbelief of the Religion of his Country, that he was a *corrupt Knave*, whether in a public or in a private Station.

Even great learning and superiority of parts, the best security, next to *Grace*, against Infidelity (and what has in fact secured the generality of exalted geniuses against this contagion) if unhappily joined with a very *corrupt heart*, have not been of force sufficient to guard men against this evil. So much has their present ease and the silencing of a clamorous Conscience got the better of all the convictions of Reason.

To this it may be objected, that many wicked men have professed the highest regard for religion: as, on the other hand, some unbelievers have been very moral men.

Both these assertions will deserve to be considered. There is no question, but that through *various* stages of wickedness, so *rational* a Religion, in which men have been brought up and educated, will stick closely by them. But the horror of this state, which the constant upbraidings of conscience must occasion, makes them naturally

rally fly for ease and respite from their torments : If *grace* abounds, they will be enabled to shake off their *vices* : If the *World* prevails, they will chuse to part with their *Religion*. Distracted by such contrary impulses, it will not be long ere they part with one or the other : and the over-abounding of *wicked example* encourages worldly men, in general, to make a wrong choice. This is the condition of the first stages of life : but it being a very *unnatural* state (men *naturally* pursuing ease) we may be sure, it will not continue long. Whenever therefore an old determined veteran in vice perseveres in the *profession* of a Religion, which denounces the most dreadful sentence on his perseverance in Iniquity, and pretends a *zeal* for *this* Religion, we may safely pronounce him to be a consummate Hypocrite. And if we attentively consider, we shall never be at a loss to account for the trouble he gives himself, in putting on, and still wearing so hazardous a mask. We shall find it to be either his *profession*, his *station*, his *connexions*, or some *lower personal Interest*, that obliges him to profess his attachment to religion. Or if haply these marks be difficult to find, there are others, which never fail to betray this species of Hypocrisy. Such as these, this pretended Religionist always makes the *truth* to be the same thing with what happens to be the *established*. He therefore joins with the *real Bigot*, to discourage all enquiries into truth, and is the first to decry and persecute the Inquirer.—And so much for the *Religion* of the *habitual* Sinner.

As to the other part of the objection, *that some Unbelievers have been moral men*. This will amount to no more than an *exception to a general rule*, which says that Unbelievers are commonly wicked men. And the causes which produce the *exception* are easily accounted for.

Unbelief has of late become so fashionable, that its advocates have formed and fashioned it into a kind of system, and supported and adorned it with all the arts of sophistry and false reasoning : so that it would be no wonder if, here and there, a moral man of cool

appetites and enfeebled reason, seduced by specious appearances, should chance to do credit to this miserable Philosophy. This, joined to a vanity of doing honour to a sect (so much and justly spoken against by sober men, for the *immoralities* of its professors) may possibly produce a *moral free-thinker*. But such a phenomenon is extremely rare: So rare, that, of all our leaders in Infidelity (and England has produced a greater swarm than almost all the world besides), we hear but of one or two, who ever passed for honest men. And the man who had this luck, though he got the character of temperance, justice, candour, charity, in his commerce with the world, yet it is well known to all who have seen his writings, that, in the management of controversy, he has knowingly violated both truth and charity.

On the whole then, we cannot but conclude with the text, that *because of the abounding of Iniquity the love of many, for our holy faith, has waxed cold.*

But we are not to expect that these *apostates* will own that *Iniquity* is the *cause* of their apostasy. They have always assigned other causes of it, which in their opinion clears them from all suspicion of unjust prejudice or prevention. And these are,

1st, The immoral and unexemplary lives of the Clergy. And,

2dly, The irrational system of Christianity.

Let us examine both these pretences.

They will not believe the truth of the Christian Religion on account of the unsanctified Lives of its ministers. But what has this to do with the *truth or falsehood* of a Revelation established upon full evidence, evidence which has nothing to do with the personal Character of its ministers? Was irresistible Grace promised, by this Religion, to them, something might be said for so absurd a conclusion; which infers the falsehood of a Religion from the follies of its Pastors. But since they continue men, as other men are, as well *after* they have devoted themselves to the service of the altar,

altar, as *before*, and liable to all the common infirmities of humanity, no conclusion can be drawn from their personal discredit, to the discredit of that Religion which they so unworthily serve.

Again, as to the irrational and absurd tenets of the Religion itself. It is certain no such could come from God. And if our Religion teaches that such did come from him, this were fully sufficient to discredit it. But our free-thinkers should have been *assured* of what they say, by a careful study of the Scriptures themselves, before they advanced so heavy a charge against the Religion of their Country. And so doubtless they would, had not the prejudices arising from their *Iniquities* made them very *desirous* that Religion should be a false and fictitious thing; and therefore they received *any thing* that came to them under the name of *Christianity* (so it would serve their purpose to decry and dishonour it), without examining whether it was the *genuine Gospel* of Christ, or no; nay, under a strong suspicion, and sometimes, a sure conviction, that it was not. The truth is, they knowingly give us the doctrines of *Men*, for the doctrines of *God*; and then, from the absurdities of *sects* and *parties*, of *sums* and *systems*, argue against the truth of the *Gospel*. I said, *knowingly*; for, at other times, when they have been disposed to abuse the Clergy, they have produced these very doctrines as *their* adulterate manufacture; which, when they argued against Religion itself, they called the *doctrines of the Gospel*. What are we then to conclude from this conduct, both with regard to their objections to the *ill lives of the Clergy*, and to the *absurdity of the Christian tenets*, but that they were ashamed to own to others the *true cause* of their *Infidelity*, and for their own ease would even endeavour to hide it from themselves; and, in its stead, would obtrude upon us other more *specious* causes; which yet are in themselves so inconclusive, that, but for the reason above, they would not have ventured to build upon them so important an affair as that of their own salvation. If these men therefore would persuade us that they are, as they so loudly proclaim

themselves, sincere inquirers after truth, let them, by way of experiment only, cast off their vices, reform their lives, and conform a little to the moral precepts of the Gospel : and if then these formidable objections against Revelation still wear the same face, and do not shrink into nothing, we will believe them to be honest and sincere ; which, to believe *before*, would be an *excess* of charity, that even the benevolent Genius of the Gospel would not excuse, or support.

The conclusion and inference from the whole is this, that it is infinitely to the discredit of modern infidelity, and as much to the honour of our holy faith, that it is *Iniquity* which makes unbelievers. For how miserable must that Cause be, where the true reason of their rejecting Revelation is one of the marks of its truth, namely, the vengeance of Heaven against vice and immorality ! No one can think, had this Religion only offered Rewards for *Believers*, that ever there would have been such a thing as an Unbeliever ; and yet this would have been a certain mark of its falsehood, as it is of the Mahometan and other superstitions. But as soon as ever it proves its pretensions from Heaven, by pronouncing misery to Vice, as well as happiness to Virtue, *then* the world begins to swarm with Freethinkers.

On the other hand, what can be more for the honour of a Religion, than that it drives from it all determined wickedness, as not able to bear the splendor of its visage ; especially when we consider that this same Religion, so terrible to hardened Vice, bears the most benignant aspect to a repentant sinner, whom she invites to her bosom, and to whom she communicates all her comforts and consolations ?

Let therefore such who have been so unhappily deluded by their sins as to rivet them into their nature, by a fatal *Unbelief*, view and contemplate this *rejected Religion* on this side, where with so much pity and compassion she throws out her arms, to recover these her deluded Children from final perdition. The frequent  
contemplation

contemplation of this would with the Grace of God (always at hand to assist the honest endeavours of men), at last enable them to break their fetters, recover their liberty, and return again into one fold, under one Shepherd, *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. Amen.

*True Christians, the Salt of the Earth.*

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

T H E K I N G,

MARCH 12, 1769.

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MATT. V. 13.

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. BUT IF THE SALT HAVE  
LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT  
IS FROM THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE CAST  
OUT, AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT.

OUR Blessed Master hath here, in an happy union of scien-  
tific and popular instruction, arising from the joint aid of the  
sentiment and the expression, supported a particular truth on a ge-  
neral principle.

The

The *particular truth* is, that the loss of the *Salt*, or genuine spirit of Christianity, cannot be supplied by any human expedient whatsoever : and it is supported on this *general Principle*, that every thing hath its *Salt* or essential quality, which makes it to be what it is ; and, without which, it is no longer the same, having degenerated into another thing.

Much of our blessed Master's instruction pointed to future corruptions in his holy Religion ; for at the time when he first impregnated the world with, what he here calls, *the salt of the Earth*, there could be little danger of its *losing it's savour* during that generation.

The observation was made to be *recorded* by the sacred Penmen ; that when this *loss* or decay of *savour* should arrive, we might *remember* (to use his own words) *that he had told us of it*.

And it is one of the miserable Prerogatives that we, the Ministers of his word in these latter ages, have to boast of, above our happier Predecessors, that we are able to illustrate the divinity of our holy Faith by the completion of many Prophecies, which foretold the degeneracy of the Christian Church.

But though I shall not forget the *particular Truth* inculcated in my Text, yet it is my purpose, first of all, to shew from the *general maxim* on which it is supported, that the gracious warning, contained in the observation, holds good with regard to every state and condition of human life, as well civil as religious ; that where the *Salt* or essential quality of a thing, that which constitutes its being what it is, happens to be lost or depraved, nothing can prevent the destruction of the subject in which that quality resided : no succedaneum, no adventitious quality, having the virtue or efficacy to supply its place.

To explain my meaning by the trite exempl. of the *Body-natural*, employed, on all occasions, to illustrate the various fortunes and situations of the *Body politic*.

In the human frame, the essential quality of the eye is its capacity of vision ; of the ear, to receive and modulate sounds ; of the palate,

palate, to distinguish favours; and so, of the rest. Now when the qualities appropriated to each organ of sense are lost or depraved, we find it impossible for their functions to be discharged, or their defects to be supplied by any succedaneum whatsoever. The viciated part must for ever lye useles, till the mischiefs attending the cessation of its functions end in the destruction of that body which such parts were formed and designed, by the divine Architect, to serve and support.

Just so it is in the several orders and stations of Society; which are the members, as it were, of the great Body-politic.

Suppose then the *Salt* or essential qualities of one of these members be *Frugality and Simplicity*; of another, *Learning*; of another, *Wisdom*; and of the twofold Body itself, in one part, *Love of our Country*; in the other, *Piety*: When all, or any of these, no longer operate by their respective faculties, the common Body to which they belong will soon fall into a consumptive decay.

This serious and melancholy truth our divine Master hath plainly intimated, in that elegant figure of *Salt which hath lost its flavour*.

I shall therefore first endeavour to explain the importance of his words, as they are founded on the *general Principle*, in their more enlarged and general sense: By which you may understand the helpless condition of *Society*, when any of its capital members are deprived of their essential qualities. So that, in whatsoever part you find this *Salt to have lost*, or to be in danger of losing, *its flavour*, you may hasten to restore it, or to preserve it in its natural state, instead of hoping by quack inventions to supply its place.

I. To begin with the PEOPLE. The *Salt* of this gross Body, that by which it is kept sweet, are modesty, industry, parsimony, and simplicity of manners.

How far these qualities now make, or mark, the characteristic of the People, we all see.

Instead

Instead of that *modesty*, by which the English Populace, till of late, have been so advantageously distinguished, a censorial spirit, not of their hearts but of their heads, hath got possession of them. They erect themselves into Controllers of the conduct of their Governors; they prescribe laws to the Legislature; and rise in tumults against the sentence of public Justice. In prosperity, they are insolent; in adversity, outrageous. A People turbulent and servile; mutinous and corrupt; impatient in want; improvident in abundance; and equally unawed by the uplifted hand of Heaven and the Magistrate.

That *Parfimony and simplicity of manners*, which had long supported their station in ease and credit, are now lost in the distresses attending luxury and riot. Hence, mad factions, and criminal associations, which shake, and threaten to overturn, the very foundations of Society.

And now, wherewith shall this *unfavoury* Body be *salted*? They are ready to tell you, with that air of Sovereignty which they have assumed,—By their large and extensive Commerce; that spring-tide of Riches; which they believe (if they believe in any thing) will set the shattered Vessel of the Commonwealth, now stranded by these wretched Pilots, once again on float.

But this gilded pageant will only add to our disorders. For a flow of wealth, which, regulated by the essential qualities of a virtuous People, would have set all to rights, will serve only to extend the luxury, to encourage the dissipation, and to enflame the insolence and riot, of a lawless crew of miscreants.

II. THE MINISTERS OF RELIGION acquire their honoured character from their LOVE OF TRUTH, manifested in the cultivation of GOOD LETTERS. And none have surpassed the English clergy in the glorious exercise of these essential qualities. They rose to that distinction, and, indeed, they could rise no otherwise, by the mutual aid which those two qualities imparted to one another.

Now if ever the *Salt* of this sacred order should become vapid (which Heaven avert !) by a coldness for *Truth* and an indifference for *Letters*, one may easily guess what contrivances will be employed, and to how little purpose, to preserve appearances, when the virtue and efficacy of things are lost.

An affected MODERATION will try to soften, when it cannot warm, that rigid *coldness* ; and a blush of MODESTY will be assumed to animate that lifeless *indifference*. But these painted virtues will not bear the weather : this *moderation* will fade, and betray the pallid hue of IGNORANCE ; and this *modesty* soon appear to be only the varnish of SCEPTICISM.

Now though counterfeits do, in the very act, bear testimony to the excellence of the genuine qualities they usurp, (and we know that MODESTY commonly attends, and always adds a lustre to Truth ; and MODERATION best recommends the *Teachers* of it to the world ;) yet counterfeits can never supply the place of those Virtues they have dispossessed.

III. MINISTERS OF STATE, next to Ministers of Religion, deserve our highest reverence. Their *Salt* or essential qualities are WISDOM and GOOD FAITH. On these the success as well as justice of public measures depend. These make them beloved at home, and confided in abroad. Such have been those Pilots of the Commonwealth, who, from time to time, have safely steered the public vessel through all those dangers to which the stormy and tempestuous nature of our Free Constitution perpetually expose it.

Now whenever it shall happen, that this Ministerial *Salt* shall have *lost its savour*, is become insipid or corrupt, no expedients (though EXPEDIENTS be the Statesman's Asylum) will afford us its Virtue. Yet CUNNING and CIRCUMVENTION have been so long employed to hold the place of *Wisdom* and *good Faith*, that it, at length, became a question, which of these two kinds was the native and genuine *Salt* of the Politician ; though the History of Mankind had  
amply

amply explained the difference; and long experience had so fully convinced the Statesman himself, of the small use of *cunning* and *circumvention* in the conduct of public affairs, that he had learned to turn them, with more success, for the advancement of his own; in evading the force of that opposition he was unable to withstand; and in engrossing more power than he knew how to use.

IV. But now, from the partial and subordinate stations in Society, let us come to the *whole Community* itself; and see what is the *Salt*, and what are the essential qualities of this vast Body, this *Leviathan*, of whom it is said,—*upon Earth there is not his like*\*, in whose *parts and power and comely proportion*† (to use the language of the sacred Writer) are contained two Societies, the *civil* and the *religious*: to each of which, every individual, in a different capacity, belongs. The essential quality of the *civil*, is the *love of man*, manifested by the service of the Public: the essential quality of the *religious*, is the *love of God*, manifested in the practice of virtue and piety.

1. For, in the first part, individuals associating to obtain those worldly blessings which civil policy only can bestow, the genuine and most natural concern of each is **THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE**. Hence that reasonable pursuit, and most *heroic*, (though heroism be a passion seldom joined with reason) the **LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY**. Transported with *this*, and sacrificing all other passions to *this*, nations and people have, from the lowest and basest original, arrived at wealth and empire. A passion, which no power, no policy, no advantage of climate, no superiority in personal endowments, have ever been able to withstand. Inflamed and purified by this passion alone, the Banditti of Rome came, in time, to give Law to the discipline and science of Greece; to the policy and commerce of Egypt; and to the opulence and immense power of Asia.

Whenever this passion hath shone strong amongst us, we have seen England become the Pacificator of the Continent, and rival

\* Job, xli. 33.

† Ver. 12.

Monarchs sue for our alliance.—And what is it that is said to have clouded this scene of glory? What, but the decline, the extinction, of the PATRIOT-PASSION; under the counterfeit professions of the *Faction*; the secret discouragements of the *Corrupt*; and the open ridicule of the *Profligate*.

Now, what shall we substitute to supply the loss of this essential virtue, the *Salt* of this animating principle? Something, no doubt, will be attempted, to prevent Government from falling into dishonour and contempt. There is a mimic passion, which will be vainly busied to repair this loss, by the MULTIPLICATION OF OUR LAWS: For the decay of that genuine *salt*, the *love of our Country*, being, amongst its other mischiefs, attended with a constant disposition to brave or to evade the *old established Laws*, there seems to have been as constant a provocation in our Governors to counterwork this evil by the addition of *new ones*. But this will ill support the *Patriot-passion*, or supply the want of it; when men observe, or fancy they observe, that a *multiplicity of Laws*, instead of giving strength to the general, becomes a snare and entanglement to particulars.

If we turn from the Community in its *civil*, to its *religious* capacity, we shall find its *essence* (when purified, as ours, by the GOSPEL) to consist in the *love of God, and in the practice of piety and virtue*. And this *Salt*, the native temper of Englishmen hath, in all past ages, eminently supplied: so that the *Piety* of BRITAIN was long its characteristic badge. From what fatal concurrence of unlucky accidents we have suffered this celestial flame to go out and dye away, even amidst the increase of its fuel (for never was the Christian Faith so well proved to be a *reasonable service* as in these times), it is not my purpose, at present, to enquire. The loss is notorious. It is seen by our actions, it is avowed in our speculations, and boasted of as our glory, that this *Faith* hath now no longer its wonted hold on the lives and consciences of men.

V. And now this brings me still nearer to my Text. For the GOSPEL is that SPECIFIC SALT, which our blessed Master intimates should,

should, in these latter days, *lose its flavour*; and more than intimates, should find no succedaneum to supply its place.

Yet so insensible are we grown even to the need of any, that we hardly seek or enquire for relief; contrary to the foregoing cases, where we find men busied, however vainly, to supply the depraved state of their condition, by new inventions. And were it not for the humanity of certain well-bred Gentlemen, this *crooked Generation* would be in danger of forgetting that there was any such thing as A RULE OF RIGHT, which these new Instructors offer to us, as an equivalent for THE RULE OF FAITH.

But, not trusting to this, other fancies, it is true, have been raised up to season our *inspidity*.

The MAN OF HONOUR stands forth to assure us, that a *sense of Honour* (from which sacred name he takes his title), and not of *Religion*, is the true polisher and refiner of human manners. And yet we see, modern Honour hath no other connexion with virtue than what FASHION hath chanced to make between them; and that *Honour* may thrive and do well (as the practice of fashionable men shews) amidst the breach of all God's *Commandments* and the King's.

The MAN OF SCIENCE, indeed, hath discovered a still more exquisite relief, in our distresses. He bids us procure, for ourselves, a TASTE; which, in the lucky absence of our Religion, will answer every thing. This, says he, is that true *internal feeling*, which Fanatics have so much mistaken; and only wants to be new-touched by this Philosophy, to be indeed THE GOD WITHIN.

Though if we reflect, that TASTE is governed by the *Imagination*, just as HONOUR is regulated on the *Fashion*, we may find reason to complain that our Betters have here (as usual) only provided for themselves; and that TASTE and HONOUR, like the *Quales and Manna* in the wilderness, are too delicate a repast for the gross appetites of the People: and that, however solid a consolation this new *seasoning* of the decayed *salt* of Religion may afford the polite and the well-bred, where *fashion* and *fancy* supply the place of FAITH  
and

and HOPE, yet for us *miserable sinners* a more substantial Diet is to be provided.

To sum up all—From what hath been said you may collect, how desperate the condition of things must needs be, whenever the several stations of Society, and much more when Society itself, shall have *lost* their essential qualities, the SALT which constitutes their natures, and makes them to be what they are.

How near we are approaching to this fatal period, or how far removed from it, must be left to every man's serious reflexion.

If we should be found to have fallen from that happy state in which the Creator first placed us, and to which our Redeemer restored us; the state in which nature put us, and Grace hath long supported us; what have we now to do, but, with all humility, to apply to the Author of our Salvation, that he would recall things to that Order, which, on his creation of them, he pronounced GOOD, and which, when run into confusion, he restored and harmonized, when the whole choir of Heaven sung—*Glory to God in the highest, and, on Earth, peace, good-will towards man!*

A  
R A T I O N A L   A C C O U N T  
O F  
T H E   N A T U R E   A N D   E N D  
O F  
T H E   S A C R A M E N T   O F   T H E   L O R D ' S   S U P P E R .



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A  
D I S C O U R S E  
CONCERNING THE  
N A T U R E   A N D   E N D  
O F   T H E  
L O R D ' S   S U P P E R .

**T**H E celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER being our constant duty, as it is *to shew the Lord's death till he come*\*; and likewise our greatest interest, as it is *the communion of the body and blood of Christ*†; it may not be improper to enquire into its SPECIFIC NATURE; in order to comprehend both the force of our obligation to frequent the Lord's table, and the value of that benefit we receive in worthily communicating.

The history of its institution is delivered by St. Matthew, in these words, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and "blest it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said,

\* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

† 1 Cor. x. 16.

“ Take, eat ; this is MY BODY : and he took the cup and gave  
 “ thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this  
 “ is MY BLOOD of the New Testament, which is shed for many  
 “ for the remission of Sins\*”.

The Rites and Ceremonies of the law were TYPICAL. A Type, as hath been shewn elsewhere †, arose from the ancient mode of conversing by *signs*: For, by adding a *moral import* to a significative sign, the action becomes a TYPE ‡. This sacred Rite, which (together with *Baptism*) was to take place of the whole Jewish ritual, is, like that ritual, *Typical* also : but with this difference,—The Jewish Rites were predictive of things *future* ; and so, were obscure and intricate : this, significative of a thing *past* ; and so, clear and intelligible.

Thus far as to its *form*. Its *specific nature* will be our next inquiry. To have an exact idea of this, two things must be well considered : The state of Religion at the time this Rite was instituted, and the particular season in which it was celebrated.

1. In those ages of the world when victims made so great a part of the Religion both of Jews and Gentiles, the *sacrifice* was always followed by a religious feasting on the thing offered ; which was called, the *feast upon or after the sacrifice* ; the partakers of which feast were supposed to become partakers of the *benefits* of the Sacrifice. Now, from the Gospel-history of the institution of the *Lord's supper*, and from St. Paul's reasoning upon it, a celebrated person hath long since shewn, with great compass of learning, and force of argument, That Jesus, about to offer himself a sacrifice on the cross for our redemption, did, in conformity to a general practice, institute the *last supper*, under the idea of a *feast after the sacrifice* §. So far that learned writer.

2. As

\* C. xxvi. v. 26, &c.

† Div. Leg. Book iv.

‡ Ibid.

§ Dr. Cudworth, in his *Discourse concerning the true notion of the Lord's supper*.—But to his own System, like a fair and able writer, who conceals nothing, and leaves nothing unanswered, he produces this Objection, “ That the true notion of the Lord's  
 “ Supper

2. As to the particular season in which this holy Rite was celebrated; We are to consider, that the great SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS was typically prefigured by several of the Temple-oblations; and especially by the PASCHAL-LAMB. Now just before the *passion*, and while Jesus was eating the *Paschal-supper*, which was a Jewish feast after or upon the sacrifice, he institutes this holy Rite. And as it was his general custom to allude, in his actions and expressions, to what passed before his eyes, or presented itself to his observation\*; who can doubt, when we see, in the very form of celebration, all the marks of a *sacrificial supper*, but that the divine Institutor intended it should bear the same relation to his *sacrifice on the Cross*, which the *Paschal-supper*, then celebrating, bore to the oblation of the *Paschal-lamb*; that is, to be of the nature of a *feast after the sacrifice*. For if this was not his purpose, and that no more was intended than a *general memorial, or remembrance of a dead benefactor*, why was this instant of time preferred to all other throughout the course of his ministry, any of which had been equally commodious?

This reasoning receives additional strength even from what hath been supposed to invalidate it, namely, the concluding words of the institution—*Do this in remembrance of me*. For though these words, considered alone, might signify no more than the remembrance of our obligations to him in general; yet when preceded by—*this is my body—this is my blood*, they necessarily imply the remembrance of his death and passion for us, in particular. And could there

“Supper is to be derived indeed from the Passover, but the Jewish Passover had no relation to a Sacrifice, being nothing else but a mere FEAST; and therefore, from analogy to the Jewish Rites, we cannot make the Lord's supper to be Epulum Sacrificale, a feast upon Sacrifice?” And then answers it at large, in the second and third Chapters of his *Discourse*, with that invincible force of learning and reasoning almost peculiar to him.

\* See Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, p. 148. where he takes notice how Jesus, from the approach of harvest, from the lilies in bloom, from the fig-trees shooting out, from the sheep kept in folds near the Temple, for sacrifices, &c. took occasion to inculcate his spiritual doctrines and precepts.

be a *feast after the sacrifice* in which that sacrifice was not commemorated ?

It is true, the injunction of doing it *in remembrance* implies, that the celebration was to be continually repeated ; which was not the case of *feasts after the sacrifice* ; on which, as we say, this holy Rite was modelled. But this was a necessary difference ; for the great Sacrifice itself, of which this *Feast* was a type, differed in the same manner from all other sacrifices. The Jewish and Pagan Oblations had, or were supposed to have, only a passing and temporary virtue : The Sacrifice on the cross is of perpetual efficacy ; and will continue to operate till the consummation of all things. It seemed fit, therefore, that the operating virtue of this Sacrifice should be perpetually set before us, in a constant celebration of the *Feast upon it*.

We have now seen what may be naturally, and indeed what must be reasonably, inferred of Christ's purpose in the *last Supper*, from the history of its institution.

Let us try next what we can collect of St. PAUL's sense, in this matter, who hath occasionally spoken at large concerning it. And here we shall find, that this very sort of Feast, which the words of the institution tacitly allude to, St. Paul, in order to shew the *specific nature* of the Rite, expressly draws a comparison from ; and at the same time, in order to shew the efficacy of it, informs us of the end and purpose of those *Feasts upon the sacrifice*. It is, in that place of his first epistle to the Corinthians, where he reproves the proselytes to Christianity for the idolatrous practice of eating with the Gentiles, of things offered to idols, in their *feasts upon the sacrifice*. His words are these—" I speak as to wise men :  
 " judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is  
 " it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which  
 " we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? For we  
 " being many are one bread and one body : for we are all partakers of  
 " that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh : are not they which  
 " eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar ? What say I then ? That  
 " an idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols  
 " is

“ is any thing ? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles  
 “ sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to Gôd : and I would  
 “ not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink  
 “ the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils : Ye cannot be par-  
 “ takers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils \*.”

The Apostle professeth, in this place, to write to these Corin-  
 thians under their assumed character of *wise men*. And though  
 perhaps he may use the term a little ironically, and in reproof of  
 the *divisions*, before objected to them ; yet the logical inference  
 drawn from an appeal to such a character, holds not the less, for  
 the sarcasm in which it is conveyed. My meaning is, That we  
 may fairly conclude, the reasoning to be such as *wise men* would  
 not disdain to consider ; and so regularly conducted as *wise men*  
 would best comprehend. In a word, pursued with that science and  
 precision which leaves no room for a loose, popular, and inaccurate  
 interpretation.

In the first place, therefore, we may collect, that *The Cup of  
 blessing* is not simply a general commemoration of a deceased bene-  
 factor, but a commemoration of Christ's death and passion : It is  
 the *communion of the blood of Christ* ; an expression, as will be seen  
 hereafter, of the utmost elegance, to imply *a feast upon the sacrifice*.  
 But the inference the Apostle draws from it, puts his meaning  
 beyond all doubt—*For we being many are one bread and one body :*  
*for we are all partakers of that one bread*. He says, *the partaking*  
*of one bread*, makes the receivers, of *many*, to become *one body*. A  
 just inference, if this Rite be of the nature of a *feast upon the sacri-*  
*fice* ; for then, the *communion of the body and blood of Christ* unites  
 the receivers into one body, by an equal distribution of one com-  
 mon benefit : But if it be only a general commemoration of a de-  
 ceased benefactor, it leaves the receivers as it found them : not *one*  
*body* ; but *many separate professors* of one common Faith.

\* 1 Cor. x. 15—21.

The Apostle having thus shewn the last Supper to be of the nature of a *feast upon the sacrifice*; for the truth of which he appeals to their own conceptions of it—*The cup of blessing—is it not the communion?* &c. *The bread, which we break, is it not the communion?* &c. He then endeavours to convince them of the impiety of their behaviour, from the nature of these feasts, as they were understood both by Jews and Gentiles; who equally held, that they who EAT OF THE SACRIFICES WERE PARTAKERS OF THE ALTAR. But what had either of these *eaters of the sacrifices* to do with the *partakers of the bread and wine* in the last Supper, if the last Supper was not a feast of the same kind with their feasts? But especially, if the three feasts, *Jewish, Pagan, and Christian*, had not one common nature, how could the Apostle have inferred that this intercommunity was absolutely inconsistent? *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils*, &c. For though there might be IMPIETY in the promiscuous use of Pagan and Christian Rites; yet the INCONSISTENCY arises from their having a common nature; and so, consequently (as they had opposite originals) from their destroying one another's effects, in the very celebration. The reasoning stands thus. Those who eat of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar. A sacrifice at the altar was a FEDERAL rite: consequently, the *feast upon that sacrifice* became a federal Rite likewise. *The Lord's table*, and *the table of devils*, therefore, being both federal Rites, the same man could not be partaker of both. This is the Apostle's argument to the *wise men* here appealed to: and we see it turns altogether on this postulatam, that the last Supper is of the nature of a *feast upon the sacrifice*: Suppose it now a *general commemoration only of a dead benefactor*, and all this reasoning vanishes; for though a man cannot execute two federal Rites which destroy one another; yet a federal rite and a bare remembrance, in two contrary religions, have none of this opposition; but may be celebrated, if not without impiety, yet without any of that inconsistency which the learned Apostle here charges upon his licentious Corinthians.

But

But this was not the only abuse they committed in the celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; nor this the only place in the Epistle declarative of the nature of that holy Rite. These Corinthians, as appears by the next chapter, had been guilty of celebrating the Lord's Supper in a very indecent manner, by confounding it with their ordinary repasts, or with convivial doings of their own invention, where charity and sobriety were too commonly violated. Now this indiscriminate celebration, the Apostle calls, the being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord* \*. A charge surely much aggravated, were the Lord's Supper instituted only to commemorate a dead benefactor. The Corinthians did not make a due distinction between their more ordinary food and the eating and drinking in memory of a deceased friend. This doubtless was a high ingratitude. Yet to rank these criminals with the murderers of the *Lord of life* is a severity in which we can hardly see the justice. But let us only suppose, that St. Paul considered the last Supper as a *feast upon a sacrifice*, that is, as a Rite in which the benefits of Christ's death and passion were conveyed, and at the same time slighted, and all becomes easy and natural. The profanation of such a Rite, by rendering his death ineffectual, was indeed aiding the purpose of his murderers; and therefore might be fitly compared, and justly equalled, to the prodigious enormity of that crime.

Such then, I presume, is the true nature of the LORD'S SUPPER. And was the adjusting a precise idea of it, as it referred to a religious custom of antiquity, a matter only of curiosity and speculation, I might perhaps have left it to the ecclesiastical historian. But it appears to me to have important consequences with regard both to our FAITH and WORSHIP. For,

1. If the last Supper be of the nature of a *feast after a sacrifice*, then is it a declaration of Jesus himself, that his death upon the cross was a REAL SACRIFICE. For figurative expression (as some are apt to deem the Gospel representation of Christ's *sacrifice* and

\* 1 Cor. xi. 27.

*atonement*) could never produce a religious Rite of divine appointment, arising from, and dependent on, a real specific action. I say, of *divine appointment*, because many of human original have been thus produced. Yet then only (which is a farther support to the preceding observation) when the *figure* had been mistaken for a *substance*.

2. If the last Supper be of the nature of a *feast after a sacrifice*, then is it productive of great and special benefits to the partakers. For the partakers of the Jewish and Gentile *feasts after a sacrifice* did, or were supposed to communicate of the benefits of the sacrifice.

However, a very learned writer, whose principles of reasoning, and method in deducing and conducting them, may serve for a model to the fair Inquirer, hath lately endeavoured to prove, in *A plain account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's supper*, "that it was instituted merely in remembrance of Christ; "that the bread to be taken and eaten was appointed to be the "memorial of his body broken; and the wine to be drunk was ordained to be the memorial of his blood shed\*." His intention in this appears commendable. It was to free the *last Supper* from Superstition; whose untimely fruit is at best but a lifeless *rubrical piety*. Yet in pursuit of this commendable design, he hath gone, I presume, too far: He hath taken away its SPECIFIC nature, and left it nothing but its GENERIC. He hath excluded the idea of a *feast after the sacrifice*, in which the celestial benefits of the Giver are conveyed, and confined us to the notion of a mere *memorial*, in which the gratitude only of the Receiver is returned.

He proceeds upon this great PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE; "That "the Bible alone ought to determine our belief in all matters of "faith and religious opinion." And this, which can never be too much insisted on, he urgeth with a freedom becoming a lover of truth, and a candour expressive of his disinclination to controversy. This may fairly be said of his general conduct.

But whether he hath been as happy in the APPLICATION of his *principle*, may be reasonably made a doubt.

\* P. 24. 3d Edit.

His **METHOD** of reasoning is not less judicious than the *choice* of his topics. He hath deduced a number of propositions tied and fastened to one another, till, with these *cords of a man*, he hath drawn the reader to his conclusion. Here, if he obtrudes upon us any false hook in the chain, the art or mistake is easily detected: If all be strong and sound, the force of it will be perceived to more advantage.

Let us examine his reasoning, therefore, with the same precision and brevity with which he urgeth it: And, as we deny his **CONCLUSION**, shew the **FAULTY LINK** which hath imposed upon his Readers; and, it may be, upon himself.

The Argument is comprised in the *eight following Propositions*.

#### PROPOSITIONS.

##### I.

“ The partaking of the Lord’s Supper is not a duty of itself; or  
 “ a duty apparent to us from the nature of things; but a duty  
 “ made such to Christians, by the positive institution of Jesus  
 “ Christ.”

##### II.

“ All positive duties, or duties made such by institution alone,  
 “ depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the person who  
 “ institutes and ordains them, with respect to the real design and  
 “ end of them; and consequently to the due manner of performing  
 “ them.”

##### III.

“ It is plain, therefore, that the nature, the design, and the due  
 “ manner of partaking of the Lord’s Supper, must, of necessity,  
 “ depend upon what Jesus Christ, who instituted it, hath declared  
 “ about it.”

##### IV.

“ It cannot be doubted that he himself sufficiently declared to  
 “ his first and immediate Followers, the whole of what he designed  
 “ should be understood by it, or implied in it.”

## V.

“ It is of small importance therefore to Christians to know what the many Writers upon this subject, since the time of the Evangelists and Apostles, have affirmed. Much less can it be the duty of Christians to be guided by what any persons, by their own Authority, or from their own imaginations, may teach concerning this duty.”

## VI.

“ The passages in the New Testament which relate to this duty, and they alone, are the original accounts of the nature and end of this institution ; and the only authentic declarations, upon which we of later ages can safely depend ; being written by the immediate followers of our Lord ; those who were witnesses themselves to the Institution ; or were instructed in it, either by those who were so, or by Christ himself ; and consent in delivering down one and the same account of this religious duty.”

## VII.

“ The Writers of the New Testament give an account of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper in the following passages, which therefore are principally to be regarded, viz. St. Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 26, &c. St. Mark, chap. xiv. ver. 22. &c. St. Luke, chap. xxii. ver. 19, &c. and St. Paul, 1 Cor. chap. xi. ver. 23, &c.”

## VIII.

“ It appears from these passages, that the End for which our Lord instituted this duty was the *remembrance* of himself ; that the bread to be taken and eaten was appointed to be the *memorial* of his body broken, and the wine to be drunk was ordained to be the *memorial* of his blood shed : or (according to the express words of St. Paul) that the one was to be eaten and the other drunk in *remembrance* of Christ, and this to be continued until he, who was once present with his disciples, and is now absent, shall come again \*.”

\* Plain Account, p. 2—24.

As this, which the learned writer uses, is the method of the Demonstrators, one would wonder by what force of invention he was enabled to deduce this conclusion. But we often see, that where force is wanting, a little matter of address will supply its place.

The 4th *Proposition*, which runs thus, performed the feat. "It cannot be doubted (says he) but that he himself [Jesus] SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED to his first and immediate followers the whole of what he designed should be understood by it [the *sacrament of the Lord's Supper*] or implied in it."

Now I apprehend *this* to be the *faulty LINK*; and that all the connexion it hath with the *propositions*, which precede and follow it, lies in the unperceived ambiguity of the terms SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED: Which may either signify, *declared by express words*; or, on the other hand, *declared by significative circumstances*, such as respect the time, the occasion, the mode of acting, or the manner of speaking. For the communication of our thoughts is carried on as well by EXPRESSIVE ACTIONS as by WORDS AND SOUNDS: nor did the first bear a small part in the converse of the Ancients\*; especially amongst the Jewish people of all ages, to the time in question.

Hence it comes to pass, that though we are agreed in the Proposition, that *Jesus sufficiently declared the whole of what he understood by his last Supper*, we draw so different conclusions: The learned writer, that it was simply a *remembrance of Christ*; I, that it was of the nature of *a feast upon the sacrifice*. For he considers only what Jesus in express words SAID, at the institution of this holy rite: I take in both what he SAID and DID; and not only that, but the MODE of saying and doing; relative to the time, the occasion, the manners, and the customs of the Age; as being persuaded, that the speaker's meaning can be but very imperfectly understood without taking in all these things. A rule of interpreta-

\* See Divine Legation, Vol. II. Book IV. Sect. 4.

tion, in which, I suppose the learned writer would concur with me, were the point concerning a difficulty in CLASSICAL expression.

This, then, I understand to be the only remaining question, Whether or no the Disciples of Jesus (as it is agreed, their Master did not, in express words, call this rite, *a feast upon sacrifice*) could collect, from the whole of the circumstances attending the institution, that it was indeed of the nature of such a feast? namely, from the critical time of the celebration, which was just before his passion, and at the Jewish paschal supper; from the peculiarity of phrase employed in the institution, of which more hereafter; and from his accustomed manner, in the execution of his ministry, to adapt his words and actions to the scene or subject before him? Now, I suppose, that, from these circumstances, one may fairly conclude, the Disciples might and did collect that the *last Supper* was of the nature of a *feast upon sacrifice*.

For, 1. it was much in the genius of those times to convey information, as well by actions and indirect circumstances, as by speech and explicit words. So that the hearer would be naturally as attentive to the one mode of instruction, as to the other.

2. Nothing can be conceived clearer or more expressive of such *a feast*, than the circumstances attending the institution of this; as may appear from hence, That we, who live in an age when such modes of converse are, and have been long disused, yet see, in these circumstances of time, occasion, and mode of expression, such an aptitude to convey the idea of a feast *after the sacrifice*, as, I am persuaded, sufficiently informs every capable person of the nature of this feast.

3. Though the Disciples are indeed represented by the Evangelists as exceeding flow and dull to apprehend *the things of God*, yet this concerned only the *spiritual meaning* of such *things*; from which their inveterate prejudices for a *carnal æconomy* had shut up all their faculties; so as to deny any introduction to a new Religion, opposite to the *temporary* purposes of their old one. It doth  
not

not appear, they had any natural defect of apprehension to understand a plain allusion to the rites and customs of their Law ; which the institution in question directly objected to them.

But what is here urged will receive further light as well as strength from the remarkable reasoning of St. Paul upon this holy Mystery. We have seen above, that the language he employs to explain his ideas, and the similitude he brings to enforce his reasoning, are adapted only to the consideration of the last Supper's being *a feast upon a sacrifice*. Now one or other of these things will needs follow, Either that he had an express revelation, as well of its nature as of the History of its institution, from Christ himself, at the time of his conversion ; or that he logically inferred this its nature from the several circumstances of the history of the institution.

If we hold the first, The dispute is at an end : If the second, What hindered the rest of the disciples from doing the same ?

I should be inclined to the latter opinion ; and that all which was revealed to him by Jesus, was the history of the institution as we find it recorded in the Gospel. His own words, where he tells us how he came by his knowledge, seem to decide in favour of this opinion. “ For I have received (says he) of the Lord, that “ which also I deliver unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same “ night in which he was betrayed, took bread : And when he had “ given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, “ which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After “ the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, “ as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as “ ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death “ till he come \*.” This is the whole of his account concerning the history of the institution. He then proceeds, in the next verse, to reason from it—“ Wherefore whoever shall eat this bread and

\* 1 Cor. xi. 23.

“ drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body  
 “ and blood of Christ.”

So far then as to the SUFFICIENT DECLARATION of the mind of Jesus to his *immediate followers*, concerning the nature of this holy Rite. The Reader, perhaps, may think this reasoning not a little strengthened by what the excellent Cudworth says of this matter. “ But lest we should seem (says he) to set up fancies of  
 “ our own, we come now to DEMONSTRATE that the Lord’s  
 “ Supper is a *feast upon sacrifice*; in the same manner with the  
 “ *Jewish* and *Heathen*. And that from a place of Scripture where  
 “ all these three are compared together and made exact parallels  
 “ to one another. 1 Cor. x. 14—21. Where the Apostle’s scope  
 “ being to convince the Corinthians of the unlawfulness of eating  
 “ things sacrificed to Idols, he shews, that though an idol was  
 “ *physically* nothing, yet *morally*, to eat of things sacrificed to Idols  
 “ in the Idol’s temple was to consent with the sacrifices, and to be  
 “ guilty of them. This he illustrates *first* by a parallel Rite in  
 “ the Christian religion, where eating and drinking of the body  
 “ and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is a real COMMUNICA-  
 “ TION in his death and sacrifice. *Secondly*, from another parallel  
 “ of the same rite amongst the Jews, where always they that ate of  
 “ the sacrifices were accounted partakers of the Altar. Therefore,  
 “ as to eat the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, is  
 “ to be made partaker of *his* sacrifice; as to eat of the Jewish sacri-  
 “ fices was to partake in the *legal* sacrifices themselves; so to eat  
 “ things offered up in sacrifice to idols was to be made partakers of  
 “ the idol sacrifices, and therefore was unlawful. The things which  
 “ the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to *Devils*; but Christ’s body  
 “ and blood was offered up in sacrifice to God, and therefore they  
 “ could not partake both of the sacrifice of the true God, and the  
 “ sacrifice of Devils. St. Paul’s argument here must needs sup-  
 “ pose a PERFECT ANALOGY between these three, and that they  
 “ are ALL PARALLELS to one another, or else it hath no strength.  
 “ Where-

“ Wherefore I conclude from hence, that the *Lord's Supper* is the  
 “ same amongst Christians, in respect of the Christian sacrifice,  
 “ that, amongst the Jews, the feasts upon the legal sacrifices were ;  
 “ and, amongst the Gentiles, the feasts upon the idol-sacrifices ; and  
 “ therefore *epulum sacrificale*, or *epulum ex oblatis* \*.”

But this apostolic reasoning, so well enforced by the modern Doctor, our learned Writer found himself obliged to explain away, before he could establish his own Hypothesis.

First then, he gives us a long paraphrase on the reasoning of St. Paul †; which, you may be sure, he makes very conformable to his own System. But to this, it is enough to oppose the short one of Dr. Cudworth just now delivered. And what is wanting in the weight of its authority, some may think to be sufficiently supplied by the advantage of a certain favourable prejudice, “ That the sense which is easiest, and needs the fewest words to explain, is the most likely to be the true.” However, where the learned writer supports his own paraphrase by *criticism* or *reasoning*, he will deserve all our respect and attention.

First then, on the words—*The cup—which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*—he observes, that, “ though  
 “ this be interpreted by many learned men to signify a *communion*,  
 “ or partaking of *all* the *benefits* of *Christ's* body broken, and blood  
 “ shed, yet, he thinks, the words cannot have that signification—  
 “ That, the Greek word *κοινωνία*, used by the Apostle, and the  
 “ word *communion*, which is Latin, both signify a JOINT PARTAK-  
 “ ING, or a partaking of something in common with others of the  
 “ same society. And this *joint partaking* of Christ's body and blood  
 “ can signify no more than eating his body and drinking his blood  
 “ as a society of his disciples ‡.”

\* A Discourse concerning the true Nature of the Lord's Supper, Chap. IV.

† From p. 32 to 39.

‡ P. 39, 40.

To this, it may be sufficient to observe, that if, by the word *Κοινωνία*, the Apostle had meant, as the learned writer supposeth he did mean, *a joint partaking, or a partaking in common with our fellow Christians of the bread and wine*, he would have expressed his meaning. In the text, there is not a tittle of *fellow Christians* or *others* of the same society. It is *Κοινωνία τῷ αἵματι*—*Κοινωνία τῷ σώματι*, *the communion of the blood—the communion of the body*. Had he meant what the learned writer makes him to mean, he would doubtless have said *Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ σῶμα*—*Your communion in the body*, i. e. your eating of it jointly. St. Paul knew how to express himself properly. And if this had been his meaning, he would have expressed himself in some such manner; as appears from a passage in his epistle to the Philippians, where he is professedly speaking of this joint participation of a blessing. *Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* \*—*Your communion in the Gospel*, i. e. your joint belief and profession of it.

But the fallacy of the reasoning seems to lye in the sense the learned writer gives to the Greek and Latin words, as if they could signify nothing but *a joint partaking* with some other man, or body of men: and then indeed they could signify nothing else, in this place, but what they signified in all others. But He seems not to have considered, that though indeed this be their direct and original sense, yet, as is common to moral modes, they had taken another, by their being applied to *spiritual* beings, as well as to man; nay even to inanimate things, as may be seen in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, *Κοινωνία παθημάτων αὐτοῦ* †, *the fellowship or communion of his sufferings*. Now, when thus applied, the idea of our joint fellowship with men is not contained, except where that fellowship is expressed: as will appear from the following words of the same Apostle. *Κοινωνία τῷ υἱῷ*—*the communion of the Son* ‡; *Κοινωνία τῷ αἵνῳ πνεύματος*—*the communion of the Holy Ghost* §. In these in-

\* Phil. i. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 9.

† Phil. iii. 10.

§ 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

stances, there is no pretence for admitting the idea of a *joint-partaking with our fellow-Christians*: with whom, however, we believe in common in the *Son*, and in the *Holy Ghost*; because here is no joint act, defined by time and place, as in the institution of the last Supper; which, I suppose, is the reason of the learned Author's giving this sense to *communion of the body and blood*.

But to make it still more apparent, that where the sacred writers use the word *Κοινωνία* in this construction, to signify our *union with our salvation*, no such *joint partaking* is to be understood, it will not be improper to consider the following passage, where St. John expressly distinguisheth the communion with Christ, from the communion or fellowship with one another: 'Εὖν εἶπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ—κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων \*. *But if we say we have fellowship with him—we have fellowship with one another*; and by this mode of inference, and only by this, *the communion of the blood*, and *the communion of the body*, may likewise signify what the learned Writer would have it, a *joint-partaking*, or *communion with one another*.

The learned Writer then goes on, to *reason* on the passage in question: and, when he hath done that, returns afresh to criticise the word *Κοινωνία*. It may not be improper, therefore, before we proceed to his *reasoning* on the passage, to consider what he further urgeth in behalf of his sense of *Κοινωνία*; and so, lay all his criticisms together. He tells us then, that “there is little ground for “the remark of some learned men, that the word *Κοινωνία* (*communion*) is used where the inward or *spiritual* part of the Lord's Supper is spoken of; and the word *μετέχειν*, (*partaking*) afterwards used, where the *external* only is meant; when we see the word *Κοινωνοὶ* (*communicants*) here used with regard to idols; where no *spiritual* part could be thought of. For the whole argument supposes an *Idol* to be *nothing*; and the Christians concerned, to have no thought of receiving good or harm from

\* 1 Gen. Ep. i. 6, 7.

“those idols.—Now the same words being used with regard to  
 “Christ and those Dæmons [*Koinwía* and *Koinwvov* in one verse;  
 “and *μέτεχεν* in another] it follows that *Communion* and *partaking*  
 “are words of the same signification in both cases \*.”

There is no ground, he says, for the distinction; since, in the place in question *Koinwía* is used when no *spiritual part* could be thought of. What, *no spiritual part*, when the question was of communicating with *Idols*? No, for St. Paul says, *an Idol is nothing*. This is true. But he says, at the same time, that these *Idols* were *Devils*; for that the *Gentiles sacrificed to Devils*, and that those who eat of such sacrifices had *communion with Devils*. Now, the *DEVIL*, in St. Paul's opinion, was *something*. He says, indeed, *an Idol is nothing*. But does he mean a metaphysical non-entity? Surely, not: for he immediately adds, that the *thing offered to them* was likewise *nothing*. He must use the negation therefore in a *moral* sense, “That no *benefits* could accrue to the idolatrous worshippers.” But this is consistent enough with the moral entity of the Devil: and while that remained, a *spiritual part might well be thought of*, when the Apostle spoke of *communicating with him*. The consequence is, that the criticism of those *learned men*, who distinguished between *Koinwía* and *μέτεχεν* stands good, for any thing this learned writer hath said to the contrary. Consider the words—*What say I then? That the Idol is any thing, or that which is offered to Idols any thing? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship (or communion) with Devils*. There seems to be no great difficulty in the Apostle's meaning; which amounts plainly to this—“a Gentile idol, as a protector and benefactor, is indeed *nothing*, their Idols being the celestial bodies, deceased Ancestors, Legislators, or Kings: but the Author of Gentile Idolatry was the *Devil*; therefore, says he, though ye can possibly receive no benefit from Idols, ye may yet receive real damage from the

\* P. 45, 46.

Devil, the declared enemy of mankind." So that admitting with the learned writer, against all evidence of Antiquity, That the *Christians concerned had not any thought of receiving good or harm from those Idols*, yet (which is more to the purpose) we see St. Paul had.

For whatever notions the Gentiles, or the gentitized Jews of this time, had of *Dæmons*, every man who reads the New Testament with attention will be forced to confess, that the sacred writers never use the word (and they use it often) but they always mean Satan and his Angels, the Powers of darkness, Reprobates from God and goodness. *The good and evil Dæmons of Gentilism* were indeed those *Idols*, not of the *Altar*, but of *the brain*, which the sacred writers esteemed moral NOTHINGS: And yet, of that capital enemy of mankind, the Pagans seem to have received some obscure tradition; but not unmixed with their own invented superstitions: Which preserving some traces of resemblance to the truth, and giving some conformity in the languages of Truth and Error, hath made some men draw strange conclusions, as if the Founders of our holy Religion had taken the advantage of Pagan Superstition to form a System of DEMONOLOGY agreeable to the preconceived fancies of their Converts.

We now come to the learned writer's REASONING on the passage.  
 " If we observe the Apostle's design in this argument, it will appear that he had not the least occasion to speak here of the BENEFITS of Christ's death. His design was to incite the Corinthians to *flee from Idolatry*, by shewing them what a crime it must be in a Christian to do what was accounted honour to the Gods of the Heathens, by feasting upon and *partaking* of their sacrifices. In order to do this it was not his purpose to say, *By eating bread and drinking wine in the Lord's Supper, you partake of all the BENEFITS of Christ's death*; and therefore you cannot eat of the Heathen sacrifices. Neither do I see that this is any argument at all to the point in view. But to say, *by eating bread*

“ and drinking wine, &c. you eat, drink, and partake of them, not  
 “ as at a common meal, but of bread and wine, called the body and  
 “ blood of Christ, in remembrance of and in honour to him, and ac-  
 “ knowledgment of his being your master, therefore you cannot, with-  
 “ out great absurdity and guilt, pay the same sort of honour to false  
 “ gods by feasting with their votaries, upon their sacrifices. This,  
 “ I say, is an argument to his purpose, and proves all he aimed  
 “ at\*.”

I. First then, Admitting the learned Author's representation of St. Paul's *design* to be fairly given “ that it was only to incite the  
 “ Corinthians to flee from Idolatry ;” yet I do not see, according to the Author's own way of reasoning, why it was not as much to the purpose of the Apostle to urge the last Supper's being a *communion of the body and blood in a feast upon the sacrifice*, as to urge that the last Supper was not a *common meal, but celebrated in remembrance of and in honour to Christ*. Now, this last, he owns, is *an argument to the purpose*. Why then will he exclude the other ? He immediately subjoins the reason—*this ALONE proves all that he* [the Apostle] *aimed at*. But here, as I suspect, lurks a fallacy.—Because *this alone* proves the great absurdity and guilt of these idolatrous Corinthians ; Therefore, they were not to be pushed further. According to this reasoning, Whenever a Minister of justice prosecutes a transgressor of the Laws, it would be to the purpose to prove him guilty of *theft* ; but to prove that theft, a *sacrilege*, utterly impertinent. In a word, the learned writer argues as if he thought it much to the purpose to urge the *genus* of the action, which proves them, as the learned writer says, *guilty of a great crime and absurdity*, but nothing at all to the purpose to insist on the *species* of it, which proves them, as St. Paul says, *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, i. e. his murderers*.

But it will be objected, That this illustration of the learned person's argument hath a glare of absurdity which we do not see in

the argument itself. It is true, it hath so : For in the argument itself, the glare is taken off by the artful or accidental substitution of one term for another, *benefits* for *communion* ; the *effects* of the thing for the *thing itself*. The learned person observes, that it was not to St. Paul's purpose (when his design was to excite the Corinthians to flee from idolatry) to talk of the BENEFITS of Christ's death. I do not know any one who thought it was : Not even St. Paul himself, if we may judge by his silence. For he hath not a syllable about BENEFITS. Of the communion of the body and blood of Christ he indeed speaks largely : And this seemeth to the purpose : For if the celebration of the Lord's Supper brought them to so near a conjunction with Him, it must be an aggravation both of their guilt and their absurdity to assist at the celebration of a similar feast, in a religion at enmity with His. The *benefits*, arising from this near conjunction, is another consideration ; which doth not *directly*, but *obliquely only*, affect the point in question.

II. But secondly, To excite the Corinthians to flee from Idolatry was not (as seems to be insinuated) the *whole* of the Apostle's intention in this place. That matter is particularly inforced in the *eighth* Chapter : and though it be here taken up again in the *tenth*, it is only as it maketh part of a different subject, namely the VARIOUS PROFANATIONS OF THE LORD'S TABLE, of which the Corinthians had been guilty. And this is handled from the first verse of the tenth Chapter to the thirty-fourth verse of the eleventh ; interrupted by a digression, concerning *order in their assemblies* \* : For they had neglected the rules he left with them concerning that point of Discipline. And his words, *Be ye followers of me, &c.* + suggesting a reproof, it occasioned the intermediate digression : from whence, he returns to his main subject, *the profanations of the Lord's table* : which he had introduced by an observation of the same misbehaviour in their Forefathers : Who, like them, when under the conduct of Moses, had, in various ways, abused those miraculous

\* From ver. 2 to 16 of chap. xi.

+ Chap. xi. ver. 1.

blessings of manna from Heaven, and water from the Rock ; which St. Paul elegantly accommodates to this occasion—*For they did all eat the same spiritual meat ; and did all drink the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them ; and that rock was Christ*\*. Now the profanations in question consisted in these two points, The frequenting the Pagan feasts† ; And the making no distinction between the Lord's Supper and their ordinary repast‡. But the crime of profanation rising in proportion to the dignity of the thing profaned, it was much to the Apostle's purpose, if not to speak of the *benefits* of Christ's death, yet to shew the last Supper to be the *communion of the body and blood of Christ*.

The learned writer's other argument against the received interpretation, is as follows——“ *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord* “ *and the cup of Devils, Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table,* “ *and the table of Devils,* is the conclusion of the Apostle's reasoning. And this cannot possibly signify ‘ *Ye cannot be partakers of the BENEFITS of the Lord's table and of the BENEFITS of the table of the heathen deities :*’ for no benefit could possibly be supposed by him to accrue from these, even to the heathen worshippers themselves.—Consequently, when, at the beginning of the argument, and to introduce only his conclusion, he asks, “ *The cup—is it not the communion, &c.* he must be supposed to mean what alone was to his purpose, ‘ *Is not our joint-partaking of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper a religious partaking of what are memorials of Christ's body and blood ?*’—the premisses therefore cannot be supposed to contain in them what has no relation to the conclusion drawn from them. In the *conclusion of partaking of the table of Devils* it must be allowed that nothing is said about *benefits* ; in the *premisses* therefore, *of the communion of the body and blood*, which lead to this, it was not the Apostle's design to speak of *benefits* ; but only of the *significancy* of that

\* Chap. x. 3, 4.

† Chap. x.

‡ Chap. xi. from ver. 17.

“ rite,

“rite, as an *act of religious honour* paid by Christians to their “Master\*.”

Now, not to repeat what hath been already observed of the Fallacy, which runs through the learned person's whole argument, by substituting BENEFITS for COMMUNION; which, however, is of much importance; for, though the partakers of the Pagan feasts could receive no *benefits* from Devils, yet they might be in *communion* with them: Not, I say, to repeat what hath been already urged, It will be sufficient to observe against the learned person's reasoning, that it is founded on a supposition, that St. Paul could not argue *ad hominem*, as the logicians speak: For if He could *so* argue, the observation hath no force. It is agreed, that *St. Paul believed no benefits could accrue to the heathen worshippers from their Idols*. But, if those worshippers themselves believed they *could*, what should hinder a good reasoner, like St. Paul, from telling these paganized Christians, that the benefits from Idol-feasts, and the benefits from the Lord's table, were incongruous and inconsistent; what, I say, but the supposed illogical liberty of arguing *ad hominem*? That these *early Christians*, who went knowingly to the idol-feasts, were as likely to expect benefit from them, as the *early Jews*, who joined idolatrous worship to that of the God of Israel, is what, I think, no man can deny. Against such Christians, St. Paul might reason hypothetically; and, for argument's sake, grant the benefits of the Idol-feasts to be real, like those of the Lord's table. And this, I suppose, is the common practice of all mankind in their reasoning on the like occasion.

The learned writer then proceeds to the confutation of those who hold the last Supper to be an *eucharistical Sacrifice, commemorative* of that upon the Cross. But though with this, neither I, nor, as I apprehend, the Church of England, are at all concerned, yet as the vindication of the *Lord's Supper* in this point is against a common Adversary, I am proud to join with the learned writer to con-

fute this strange idea of an *Eucharistical commemorative Sacrifice*, which the pious and truly respectable Mr. Robert Nelson hath endeavoured to free from the apparent absurdity of *one sacrifice's being commemorative of another*, by this Argument: "That its  
 " being commemorative no more hindered it from being a proper  
 " sacrifice than the typical and figurative sacrifices of the old law  
 " hindered them from being proper sacrifices. For as to be a type  
 " (saith this learned man) doth not destroy the nature and notion  
 " of a legal sacrifice, so, to be REPRESENTATIVE and commemo-  
 " rative doth not destroy the nature of an evangelical sacrifice \*." This is well put; but will by no means bear the test. In order to detect the fallacy of this ingenious reasoning, I must beg leave to have recourse to the principles laid down in *The Divine Legislation* †.

It is allowed then, that the *pascchal Lamb*, and the *Lord's Supper*, are both *Signs with a moral import*; and, consequently, are both TYPES. How comes it then to pass (might Mr. Nelson ask) that the *pascchal Lamb* will admit the nature of a *sacrifice*, and yet the *Lord's Supper* will not? For this plain reason. The relation which the *pascchal Lamb* bore to the *Archetype* on the Cross was, at the time of the institution, for the wise ends of Providence, kept a secret from the followers of the Law. Its *moral import* therefore (and as a TYPE it must have a *moral import*) could be only a *Sacrifice*. The case is widely different in the institution of the *Lord's Supper*. It is declared, by the Institutor himself, to be a *commemoration* of his death and sufferings. Here, the relation between the *type* and *archetype* is declared to all: consequently, its *moral import* is a *commemorative feast on a sacrifice*; but the idea of such a feast necessarily EXCLUDES a *sacrifice*; for the *Thing done*, and the *commemoration of the thing done*, can never be an action of the same kind. However, admitting it could be so; yet this type having its *moral import* in a *commemoration*, can never acquire another, of

\* Life of Bishop Bull, p. 483.

† Book IV. Sect. 4.

a *sacrifice*: which, in *metaphysical* conception, would be as monstrous as a *double body*, in *natural*. But, to shew, in one word, a difference, where the learned person thinks there is none—Take away the nature of a *sacrifice* from the Type of the *paschal Lamb*, and you leave it *no moral import*: that is, you deprive it of its nature of a *Type*. But take away the idea of a *sacrifice* from the *Lord's Supper*, and it still remains a *Type*; having still a *moral import*, by being a *commemoration* of the death and sufferings of our Lord.

Mr. Nelson himself seemed to have some confused suspicion of the weakness of his inference from the *typical Sacrifices of the old Law*; and therefore, seeing but small connexion between a *Sacrifice* and a *Commemoration* (the latter of which conveys the idea, Scripture gives us of the *Lord's Supper*) he adds the word, REPRESENTATION; which is indeed consistent enough with a *Sacrifice*: for though, of a *commemorative sacrifice*, we have no instance in practice, and can see no propriety in idea; yet a *representative sacrifice* is very good sense, and may be well supported in the command to *Abraham* to offer up his Son. But then, the History of the Institution of the Lord's Supper is not only absolutely silent, concerning this *representation*, but excludes the idea of it by making it a *commemoration*. In conclusion, however, let us observe, That a *commemorative sacrifice*, in the sense Mr. Nelson contends for, is one thing; and *sacrifices at a commemorative feast*, of which Antiquity has many examples, is quite another.

But though this matter fell so fairly in my way, and that I have only followed the example which the learned Writer set me, yet it will be of more use to return to the *Plain Account*, and consider the Author's method of establishing his own Hypothesis. It hath been hitherto esteemed an essential canon of true criticism, that, in order to form a right judgment of the specific nature of any Ordinance or Institution of Antient times, we should have a special regard to the notions, manners, and customs of those times; since it can hardly be supposed, that any solemn or public Rite of reli-

gion would be instituted without some reference to the then prevailing Opinions. But the learned Writer of the *PLAIN ACCOUNT*, as if the very title of his book would have been falsified by such an inquiry, hath attempted to explain *the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper* with as little regard to the genius and manners of Antiquity, as an English Lawyer would take of them, in his reading on a modern act of Parliament.

But the ill effects of such a partial View cannot be better understood than by reflecting, that the very same method of interpretation, which hath led the learned Writer into one extreme, concerning *the NATURE OF THE THING*, hath led the Papists into the direct opposite, concerning the *MEANING OF THE WORDS*. The celebrated BOSSUET, the most artful, as well as most eloquent, Advocate of the papal Cause, rests all the strength of the *LITERAL* interpretation of the words, *This is my body—This is my blood—* on this very *PRINCIPLE*, That the institution of the Lord's supper stands single and alone; detached from all preceding discourse; and unrelated to any contemporary Rite. His words are these—  
 “Zuinglius said in plain terms, that there was no miracle, nor  
 “any thing incomprehensible in the Eucharist: that the bread  
 “broken was a representation of the body offered; and the wine  
 “poured out, of the blood which was shed: that Jesus Christ,  
 “when he instituted these sacred symbols, gave them the Names  
 “of the things signified: however, that these were not naked  
 “Signs, nor a simple Representation; for that the remembrance  
 “and belief of the body offered and the blood shed for us nourished and sustained our souls; and further, that the Holy Spirit  
 “sealed the remission of sins, in our hearts. This, he said, was  
 “the whole of the Mystery. Now it must be owned, that *NEITHER HUMAN REASON NOR COMMON SENSE* *SUFFERED THE LEAST*  
 “*FORCE IN THIS EXPLANATION.* The words of Scripture only  
 “made all the difficulty. And yet, when one party urged—  
 “*This is my body*; The other had their answer ready—*I am the*  
 “*vine—I am the door—that rock was Christ—*It is true, that these  
 “instances

“ instances came not up to the point. When Jesus Christ said—  
 “ *This is my body—This is my blood*—he was neither propounding a  
 “ Parable, nor explaining an Allegory. The *Words*, WHICH ARE  
 “ DETACHED AND SEPARATE FROM ALL OTHER DISCOURSE, carry  
 “ their whole meaning in themselves. The business in hand was  
 “ the institution of a *new Rite*, which required the use of SIMPLE  
 “ TERMS : And that place in Scripture is yet to be discovered,  
 “ where the Sign hath the name of the Thing signified given to it  
 “ at the moment of the institution of the Rite, and WITHOUT ANY  
 “ LEADING PREPARATION \*.” On the foundation of this reason-  
 ing it is that the celebrated Prelate observes, in another place,  
 “ That Luther continued invincibly struck with the force and sim-  
 “ plicity of the words—*This is my body—This is my blood.*—The  
 “ Church had believed, without difficulty, that Jesus Christ, in  
 “ order to consummate his sacrifice, and fulfil the ancient Figures,  
 “ hath given us to eat the real Substance of his flesh, offered up for  
 “ us. She had the same idea of the blood shed for our iniquities.  
 “ Accustomed, from her birth, to mysteries incomprehensible, and  
 “ to the ineffable favours of divine love, those impenetrable won-

\* Zuingle disoit positivement, qu'il n'y avoit point de miracle dans l'Eucharistie, ni rien d'incomprehensible ; que le pain rompu nous representoit le corps immolé, et le vin, la sang répandu ; que Jesus Christ en instituant ces signes sacrés leur avoit donné le nom de la chose ; que ce n'étoit pourtant pas un simple spectacle, ni des signes tout à fait nûs ; que la mémoire et la foi du corps immolé et du sang répandu soutenoit notre ame ; que cependant le Saint-Esprit scelloit dans les cœurs la remission des pechés ; et que c'étoit la tout le mystere. La raison et le sens humain n'avoient rien à souffrir dans cette explication. L'Ecriture faisoit de la peine ; mais quand les uns oppoient, *Ceci est mon corps*, les autres repondoient, *Je suis la vigne, je suis la porte, le pierre étoit Christ*. Il est vrai que ces exemples n'étoient pas semblables. Ce n'étoit ni en proposant une parabole, ni en expliquant une allegorie, que Jesus Christ avoit dit, *Ceci est mon corps, ceci est mon sang*. CES PAROLES DETACHEES DE TOUT AUTRE DISCOURS portoient tout leur sens en elles-mêmes. Il s'agissoit d'une nouvelle institution qui devoit être faite en TERMES SIMPLES, et on n'avoit encore trouvé aucun lieu de l'Ecriture, où un signe d'institution reçût le nom de la chose, au moment qu'on l'instituoit, et SANS AUCUNE PREPARATION PRECEDENTE. Histoire des Variations, Tom. I. p. 73, 74. Ed. Par. 1730, 8vo.

“ ders contained in the literal sense did not shock her Faith : and  
 “ Luther never could persuade himself, that Jesus Christ either  
 “ purposely obscured the institution of his Sacrament ; or that  
 “ words so simple were capable of conveying so VIOLENT A FI-  
 “ GURE \*.”

Thus, we find, the learned Writer of the *Plain Account*, and M. Bossuet, both lay the foundation of their different reasonings in one COMMON PRINCIPLE, “ That the institution of the Lord's Supper was detached from all other discourse, unrelated to any other Rite, and unconcerned with any foregoing preparation.” Now, even though the falsehood of this principle had not been fully evinced, as, in truth, it has, where I shew the relation it bears to the Paschal Supper, and how easily and naturally that Supper introduced this Christian Institution ; Yet the extremes, into which it hath carried these two learned Writers, of a MERE COMMEMORATION on the one hand, and a REAL PRESENCE on the other, would raise a suspicion that this *common principle* was neither founded in reason, nor supported by fact.

I have said enough of the *commemoration* : And now turn to the REAL PRESENCE of the Catholic Bishop.

He rests it, we see, upon the force of the words ; which, in his opinion, can admit of no *figurative* sense, without doing extreme violence to human language and expression. Indeed, as far as regards *the hardness* of the figure, I believe, most Protestant Doctors have been ready enough to join with him.

\* Luther demeura frappé invinciblement de la force et de la simplicité de ces paroles : *Ceci est mon corps, Ceci est mon sang* ;—L'Eglise avoit cru sans peine, que pour consumer son sacrifice et les figures anciennes Jesus-Christ nous avoit donné à manger la propre substance de sa chair immolée pour nous. Elle avoit la même pensée du sang répandu pour nos péchés. Accoutumée dès son origine à des mystères incompréhensibles et à des marques ineffables de l'amour divin, les merveilles impénétrables que renfermoit le sens literal ne l'avoient point rebutée ; et Luther ne pût jamais se persuader, ni que Jesus-Christ eût voulu obscurcir exprès l'institution de son sacrement, ni que des paroles si simples fussent susceptibles des FIGURES si VIOLENTES—Id. ib. p. 43.

But

But this difficulty, great as it is, I presume, the preceding account of the *specific* nature of the Lord's Supper will entirely remove. By that account it appears, that the words of the institution are **FIGURATIVE**; and so far from suffering any violent conversion, that the sense of *bread* and *wine* fall into the figure of *body* and *blood*, naturally and easily; Nay, what is above all, **NECESSARILY**.

We have shewn the last Supper to be of the nature of the *feasts upon sacrifice*: in which feasts, the very *body* sacrificed was eaten. Now as this Rite was to be instituted, and first celebrated, by the very person himself who was offered up for our Redemption, the Institution must needs precede the Sacrifice. Of necessity therefore, some *symbolic elements* must be given, to be received by the Participants, instead of the very body and blood. But, as the flesh of the animal sacrificed was the meat eaten in the *feast after the sacrifice*, the symbolic elements of **BREAD AND WINE** are naturally, properly, and elegantly called, his **BODY AND BLOOD**.

Again, if it were the purpose of divine Wisdom to give this *specific* nature to the last Supper, we must needs conclude that Jesus would *intimate* such its nature to the first Participants.

But if (as, in fact, was the case) the same Wisdom thought proper (in conformity to ancient religious Custom) to intimate this only by the *occasion*, and through the *words* of the institution, then the figurative expressions of **BODY AND BLOOD** became **NECESSARY**: These only, being fully declarative of the nature of the Rite. And as *a feast upon sacrifice* made the use of the terms *body and blood* to be necessary, so, on the other side, the terms *body and blood* shew this rite to have been *a feast upon sacrifice*.

On the whole, We have, indeed, no conception how divine Wisdom could contrive a more natural, proper, and elegant way of acquainting his disciples, that the Rite, now instituted, was of the nature of *a feast upon sacrifice*, than by terming the elements of **BREAD AND WINE** communicated, his **BODY AND BLOOD**.

Thus

Thus doth the establishment of the specific nature of this Rite serve to remove a difficulty which hath long embarrassed all the several Opposers of the doctrine of TRANSUBSTANTIATION; by shewing that the FIGURATIVE WORDS of the institution are easy, natural, elegant, and necessary.

It likewise very well accounts for another difficulty, which the Advocates for a *real presence* throw in the way of common sense. They say, "If the words of the institution were only metaphorical, and especially, if the FIGURE was expressive of no more than a *death commemorated*, they might, and probably would, have been changed in the narratives, five times repeated, by the four Evangelists and St. Paul, in distinct Histories, and on different occasions: for that, no reason can be given of the unvaried use of the same words but because they are to be understood LITERALLY: and then, as they were declarative of one of the greatest mysteries in Religion, there was a necessity to record the *very terms* employed, whenever the history of the institution was related."

To this we reply, that indeed, were the words used FIGURATIVELY, and the *figure* only expressive of a *death commemorated*, as the learned Author of the PLAIN ACCOUNT supposes, it is reasonable to think, the terms would have been varied in one or other of the sacred Writers: Because, in such a case, it is natural to believe, that Writers of so different genius and acquirements would not all have the same sentiment concerning the use of these precise *terms*; so as to esteem them preferable to any other: as, in fact, on this supposition, they would not be. But we can by no means allow the consequence, That therefore they are to be understood LITERALLY: since, if we admit the Institution to be of the nature of a *feast upon sacrifice*, as we have proved it is, there will be the same necessity for the unvaried use of the terms, although they are *figurative*, as there would be, although they were *literal*. For these precise terms are as necessary to denote a *feast upon sacrifice*, the Rite we contend for, as to denote a *Sacrifice*, the enormous idea of the Church of Rome.

Here

Here too let me observe, both against our Catholic and Protestant Writer, that on this idea, of a *feast upon Sacrifice* (which no one, I think, can doubt but the primitive Christians had of the Lord's Supper) it would naturally follow, that Antiquity should always speak of this Rite in the strongest terms of veneration; as that, through which, the highest benefits of our Religion are conveyed. And this they might do, without much EXAGGERATION on the one hand; or any conception of a REAL PRESENCE on the other.

The learned Catholic Bishop saith true, that Protestants have but lamely justified the FIGURE of, *This is my body*, &c. by those other of, *I am the vine—I am the door*. And his reason is solid. *Jesus*, saith he, *in the institution of this Rite, was neither propounding a Parable, nor explaining an Allegory*. But when he would have us infer from hence, that there could be no other occasion for *such a figure*, he imposes his usual art upon us. He would not speak out. He knew there were other occasions; such as *The declaring the NATURE of a Rite*; which was the case in question. But he would cut off our way to this, by supposing it to be allowed on all hands, That *the words are detached and separate from all other discourse—that there is no leading Preparation*. Now this, we have shewn to be an absolute falsehood: The *leading preparation* was a plain one: It was the PASCHAL SUPPER. The *preceding discourse* was an affecting one: It was the mention of his approaching DEATH AND SUFFERINGS. Therefore, the words of the Institution do not, as M. Bossuet pretends, *carry their whole meaning within themselves*; but refer to things preceding and exterior. He trifles with us, when he challenges us to find a place in Scripture *where the sign hath the name of the thing signified, given to it at the moment of the institution of the Rite, and WITHOUT ANY LEADING PREPARATION*. We have shewn there was a *leading Preparation*. And that circumstance proved, the Bishop, I suppose, would retract his challenge.

In the mean time, his triumphant conclusion loses much of its Lustre.—“That, in a word (says he) which I pretend to evince,

“is,

“ is, the embarrass into which the words, *This is my body*, throws  
 “ all the Protestant party. For either we must confound all the  
 “ Mysteries of Religion, or else give a reason why Jesus hath not  
 “ used these *forcible terms* in any of his Institutions but that of  
 “ the *last Supper*. If his *body and blood* are equally present, and  
 “ as really received by the Faithful elsewhere, in the celebration of  
 “ every other act of faith, there was no reason for chusing these  
 “ **STRONG TERMS** for the institution of the *Eucharist*, rather than  
 “ for *Baptism*; and eternal Wisdom would, in this case, have ex-  
 “ pressed itself at random. This point I foretell shall be the eter-  
 “ nal and inevitable confusion of the Defenders of the *figurative*  
 “ *sense* \*.”

We see, this mighty difficulty, which is eternally to embarrass the Defenders of the figurative sense, is confessed to be at an end, on the discovery of one good reason, Why such *forcible terms* are employed in the institution of the *last Supper*, and not in *Baptism*, or in the other rites of our Religion. To send it a going therefore, we need but observe, That the last Supper, as a *feast upon sacrifice*, referred to the *Sacrifice on the Cross*, in which, the *body and blood* of Christ were offered for our redemption. Now, to design and indicate *such* a feast by the *words* of the institution, the *forcible terms* in question were naturally, properly, nay *necessarily*, employed. And the reasoning which evinces this, evinces likewise that they were used in a *figurative sense*. On the contrary, the initiatory Rite of *Baptism* referred to another Baptism already in use; in both of which the matter administered being *water*, an element at hand, it was rightly called, in the institution of the Christian Baptism, by its proper name. But *flesh and blood* being the things

\* Car ou il faut embrouiller tous les Mysteres, ou il faut pouvoir rendre une raison pourquoi Jesus Christ n'a parlé avec cette force que dans la cene. Si son corps et son sang sont aussi présens et aussi reellement reçus par tout ailleurs, il n'y avoit aucune raison de choisir ces **FORTES PAROLES** pour l'*Eucharistie* plutot que pour le *Batême*, et la sagesse eternelle auroit parlé en l'air. Cet endroit sera l'éternelle et inevitable confusion des Defenseurs du sens figuré. Histoire des Var. Tom. i. p. 477, 478.

administered

administered in the ancient *feasts upon Sacrifice*, and they not being at hand at the institution of the last Supper, the elements substituted in their place were, in an elegant conversion, called by the *improper*, and very *necessary* names of *body and blood*.

To illustrate this matter a little further.—It may be proper to observe, that another Rite, the Rite of *imposition of hands*, for procuring the descent of the Holy Spirit, is called the BAPTISM OF FIRE: in which, both the terms are *figurative*; as, in the *Baptism of Water*, both are *literal*. And why this difference? Because the Agent or instrument, employed in the latter case, being *spiritual*, there was need of figurative names, taken from material things, to aid the grossness of our conception concerning his manner of operation: But *material* things at hand, as in the former case, needed no such conversion of terms. So that all the mystery in this affair, I mean so far forth as concerns the *terms* by which a religious Rite is instituted, is only this, That when the things are of a spiritual nature, as the gifts of the Spirit; or of a material nature, not yet in *esse* (as the flesh of a sacrifice not yet offered, and therefore needing another body to be substituted in its place) There a necessity of employing *figurative* terms becomes apparent. But when the thing is a material substance, at hand, and actually employed, as water in Baptism, it would rather confound than aid our conceptions, to use improper, that is, figurative terms.

Thus we see, how, by interpreting Scripture on the common rules employed in the study of other ancient Writings, that is to say, having a special regard to the manners, customs, and opinions of those Times, the true nature and genius of the last Supper is discovered; and the sacred institution freed from the injuries to which these two extremes have long rendered it obnoxious.

But now I suppose the followers of both Systems will be ready to object, what the unbeliever will not be backward to applaud; “That it seems hard to imagine, that one of the most essential Rites of an universal Religion, designed for all times and places, should stand in need of the customs and opinions of a particular age

and country to explain its nature and genius. For the consequence of this would seem to be, the rendering its nature precarious, and in course of time, obscure and untelligible."

To which we reply, That many good ends may be discovered in this ordinance ; and, therefore, many more may be reasonably supposed, which we cannot discover.

1. A Religion, however universal, when promulged in the manner, and propagated by the instruments, which God thought fit to employ when he gave us the Religion of his Son, must needs have many dependencies on the Times which saw its rise and progress.

2. As the *Christian* Religion rose upon the foundation of the Jewish, and became the final completion of God's religious dispensations to Mankind, it was very natural for several of its parts to bear a reference to that on which it was erected ; it was very commodious that it should do so, both to perpetuate its *relation*, and to manifest its *completion*. So that, on this account, such a Religion, however universal, could not stand alone, or be independent of every thing exterior.

3. This reference to the customs and opinions of the times, was further useful, by impressing on the Religion so circumstanced, one **INDELIBLE MARK** of Truth, for the use of all ages. Had that Religion, pretending to have arisen in a remote age, brought down with it no tincture of the times, which saw its birth and increase, we might have reason to suspect or disbelieve the traditional accounts which informed us of its high antiquity.

But when we find upon it so strong a mark of ancientry ; and impressed in a manner so *natural* as to cause no suspicion ; and in a manner so *sure* as to afford no handle for Imposture ; we may be confident, that it is of the times it pretends to be. Each Age hath its character of manners, just as it hath its character of style and writing ; and as the Critics pronounce on the date of a manuscript from the turn of the phrase, and the formation of the letters, so Divines settle the æra of a Religion by the relation it bears to contemporary customs and practices. But  
were

were the MANUSCRIPT composed in an *universal Character*, and did the RELIGION contain *only the bare principles* of natural Law, delivered in the abstract, they would both want one necessary mark to ascertain their respective ages.

4. Again, This *refrained peculiarity* objected to, on the point in question, serves a still further, and greater end. It is contrived to be declarative of the TRUE NATURE of the death and sufferings of Christ.—That his death on the Cross was a SACRIFICE for the sins of the world, had been always held part of the Catholic Faith; founded on the express declarations of Scripture. But those Sects, who oppose the doctrine of a real REDEMPTION, have always striven to evade the notion of a real *sacrifice*; as that on which the doctrine of *Redemption* is founded; upon pretence, that the scripture-expressions of Christ's *sacrifice* were only figurative and allusory. Now if the *last Supper*, the rite which commemorates the death of Christ, be of the nature of the *feasts upon sacrifice*, it is self-evident that the death itself was a REAL *Sacrifice*, and not merely called so by conversion of terms, or accommodation of ideas.

5. As it was contrived to declare the real nature of Christ's death, so it likewise served this further purpose, a purpose of great importance, to declare the ABOLITION OF SACRIFICES IN REVEALED RELIGION. For if in the most solemn act of Worship, where a *Sacrifice* always took place, a *commemoration only of a Sacrifice* is celebrated, it is plain, all sacrificial rites are excluded from that Religion: And (if that Religion be the completion of God's religious dispensations) consequently, *abolished*. The Sacrifice on the Cross does, indeed, in its nature, abolish all those Jewish Sacrifices, which evidently prefigured it; but to be assured of the abolition of sacrifice in general, some more express declaration, like what we find in this significant Rite, seemed to be expedient.

6. But lastly, The very notion of an UNIVERSAL RELIGION, unrelated to, and unconnected with, the times in which it was first divulged, is, in truth, repugnant to common sense and the nature of things. This Religion, as the Objectors tell us, is de-

signed for all times and places. Some good method therefore of conveying it to posterity, and of perpetuating the conveyance, must be thought of and employed. There are but two ways of doing it, by one or other of these means of human communication, ORAL TRADITION or WRITING. *Tradition* hath been ever found insufficient for the purposes of Truth and Religion; and incapable of securing either their purity or existence. The only method which remains, is by *Scripture*: and this being to be composed in the living language of the age in which the Revelation was given, some parts of it must, in course of time, grow obscure: as depending on the circumstances of the users, whose customs and manners give the shape and colouring to all their discourse. So that, to understand the exact sense of the terms, and the full energy of the phrase, the customs and manners of the times, which fashioned the words and ornamented the idiom of the language, must of necessity be diligently studied, if we would arrive at any competent skill in the interpretation of such writings. Now this circumstance, which produced the objection, resulting from the very nature of things, we see how little force it hath against the truth of an *universal Religion*.

The conclusion from the whole is this, That we should, with all submission, take God's Laws, as he, in his wisdom, hath been pleased to give them; and as the order and condition of things, by him established, permits us to receive them.

Having now so largely enquired into the SPECIFIC NATURE of this holy Rite; we are enabled, in very few words, to shew (which we proposed, as the principal end of the Enquiry) what those benefits are which we receive at the *Lord's Table*; and what the obligations are, which we lye under, of frequenting it.

Christ, by the SACRIFICE of himself upon the cross, purchased the *Redemption* of Mankind: And this Rite being by its nature commemorative thereof, as it is a *feast upon Sacrifice*; each partaker receives, of consequence, the seal of pardon, and consequently, of restoration to his lost Inheritance.

But

But as this operates only on the terms of *repentance, and newness of life*, the gift would be defeated, by being bestowed on a condition which our perverse Nature so much opposes, was not this Nature softened and subdued by the power of GRACE; that promised blessing, peculiar to the Gospel-Dispensation. Now as the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT constitutes the most intimate COMMUNION OF GOD WITH MAN, What *time* can we conceive so highly sanctified for the reception of it, as that in which we renew our federal union with our Lord and Master, in his last Supper; called by St. Paul, the *communion of his body and blood*.

This leads us to what only remains to be considered, THE OBLIGATION TO FREQUENT COMMUNION: and this obligation will be best understood, by considering the reasons of an Institution which procures us so high a prerogative as *an union with the God of our Salvation*.

We are, by the Sacrament of BAPTISM, united, as members to the MYSTICAL *Body of Christ*, his CHURCH. And since Church-membership is not only an outward but a public, rather than a private thing, One single administration of such Rite is sufficient to make that union lasting.

But, by the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, we are united, as members, to the SPIRITUAL *Body of Christ*, his GRACE. 'This is an inward union, and a particular: and lasts no longer than the right disposition of heart and affections shall continue: and this, by reason of our corrupt nature, and perpetual commerce with an evil world, being always impairing, it has always occasion to be strengthened and renewed. This, as we said, is the office of the *Holy Spirit*; whose gracious influence more peculiarly sanctifies that holy season. Hence the use and necessity of FREQUENT COMMUNION; intimated in the words of the institution, *Do this in remembrance of me*: Which imply, as we have shewn, more than *preserving the memory of a dead benefactor*; they imply, the *continuing to receive his benefaction*; which is conveyed to us, from time to time, and *as often as we shew forth the Lord's death till he come*. So true  
is

is the account given of this sacred Rite in the ARTICLES of our Church, That *it is not only the badge or TOKEN of a Christian man's profession, but rather a certain and sure witness and effectual sign of Grace, and God's good-will towards us; by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also STRENGTHEN and confirm our faith in him* \*.

All this duly considered, we shall, I hope, be enabled to regain a proper veneration for this *holy Mystery*; which hath of late been so fatally impaired, as by other liberties, so principally by the prostitution of it to CIVIL PURPOSES; Not a prostitution by the LEGISLATURE; but by those licentious men, who, contenting themselves with the observance of the form and *letter*, neglect the end and *spirit of the LAW*.

\* Art. xxv.

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**A C. H A R G E**

**T O T H E**

**CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER, 1761.**

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# A C H A R G E.

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MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

**I**N the simplicity of the good old times, when the Clergy *first* met their BISHOP, who might be then said, in every sense, to do the honours of the Assembly, He held it incumbent on him, to inform them by what means this relation had sprung up between them; that it was neither clerical ambition on his part, nor court intrigues on the part of his Patrons, which drew him from his beloved obscurity; but a mere sense of the Church's want of good Governors, that had induced the State to force out his reluctant merit into so eminent but hazardous a Station.

This was an ancient custom, and a good. The acquaintance between the Bishop and his Clergy could not commence more happily than in the information he gave them of the confessed importance of his Character.

In course of time, this friendly confidence was found to have its inconvenience, which, by degrees, brought on the disuse; and this without much violence on the communicative disposition of the Diocesan: For now the Clergy were become little curious to know

how, or from whence, their Bishop had dropt down amongst them ; and he as little disposed to tell them a ridiculous or unedifying story. It was enough that they met ; and that their meeting was to their mutual content.

This it could not fail to be, as it was devised for these two good purposes :

First, That the Bishop might from time to time remind his Clergy, thus assembled, of their obligations to the faithful discharge of the *pastoral care*.

And secondly, That he might receive, in return, their best advices for the good government of his Diocese.

But this latter purpose, whether through the modesty of the Clergy, or the sufficiency of their Diocesan, is now forgotten. A neglect much to be lamented, as the two duties have a close connexion with one another : yea necessary to support and maintain that harmony which should always subsist between the Bishop and his Clergy, while every return of this triennial meeting becomes a mutual interchange of good offices.

Believe me then, my Reverend Brethren, that I shall always esteem your counsel and advice as the most valuable mark of your affection and attachment to me.

But inveterate Custom hath so long prevailed, that these Meetings are now entirely taken up with the first part only of their destined purpose—the Diocesan's exhortation to the faithful discharge of the *Pastoral care*. And though sometimes his discourse may have deviated, and not a little, from the occasion, yet the title, common to them all, still keeps up the remembrance of the thing : the name, **CHARGE**, implying that they had once a common subject, and that subject the **PASTORAL CARE**. For the name is not taken from the decisive harangues bearing the same title, in civil Judicatories, where the presiding Magistrate explains the Law to an uninstructed Audience, or enforces it to the inferior Ministers of Justice. Nor yet from a Command or *Charge* which a Lord and  
Master

Master imposeth on his Servants; but from that tender and pathetic exhortation of St. PAUL, in his *Pastoral Letter* to the Thessalonians——“ You know (says he) how we exhorted and comforted, and CHARGED every one of you, *as a Father doth his children*, that you walk worthy of God, who hath called you “ to his kingdom and glory\*.” Thus are names sometimes of use to call back deviating or depraved Institutions to their original rectitude.

A CHARGE from this place, therefore, which did not first and principally exhort to the faithful performance of this capital duty, would want much of its essential integrity.—Literary acquirements, a zeal for the present Government, Personal morals, and soundness in the orthodox Faith, may have their turns on this occasion; but as *means* only to this capital *End*.

Let me never forget, therefore, first of all to exhort you, with all the warmth and earnestness becoming your Pastor and Overseer, to pay a strict attention to this principal and characteristic duty.

But when I have done this, I reckon, I have done all that is necessary on so beaten a subject, and to so well-instructed an Audience. If any thing further be wanting, it will be only to caution you, in the discharge of it, against those two extremes of temper, *Lukewarmness* and *Fanatic zeal*: This accompanied with a morose severity of Manners, which makes even the Gospel-morals unamiable; That, with dissipation and love of pleasure, which gives scandal to the sounder part of your Flock, and a bad example to the unsound.

The *Pastoral care*, therefore, we will suppose to be ever in our view, and the pleasing Object of all our labours. What the younger Part of you may haply want, is only to be assisted in the best means to this end. You may occasionally need to have it explained

\* 1 Thess. ii. 11.

to you—How your own *integrity of Morals* best facilitates this *Care*, by procuring you the esteem and reverence of your Flock—How the *extent of your knowledge* will enable you to throw a fence round your Fold, that shall bar all entrance to *Fanaticism*, whether spiritual or literary; to *Bigotry*, whether religious or civil; to *Infidelity*, whether philosophical or immoral.—And lastly, How the *soundness of your Faith* will secure you from labouring in vain. In a word, you may need occasionally to be instructed, in what manner the great work of Salvation may be accomplished to the best advantage: You will rarely need to be informed of the importance of the work itself.

Give me leave, then, to take up one of these Topics for your present consideration.

And, as the best human security, I know, against the mischiefs just now enumerated, is, *Superior abilities in the learning of your Profession*, I shall choose to select this for the subject of my discourse.

And purposing, hereafter, to hazard my thoughts concerning *the best method of studying Theology*, I desire, that what I now say may be understood as addressed to you, the younger part of my Brethren: The elder being better qualified to give, however ready, in their modesty, they may be to receive, advice on this important subject. Indeed, to these reverend men I might well remit the care of instructing their younger Brethren, did I not consider that *advice* and *direction* may possibly come with somewhat more authority, as it certainly comes with more solemnity, from this place.

I would suppose, from the circumstances both of your private and public Character, that there is no occasion to excite you to the pursuit of KNOWLEDGE; especially when, from the circumstances of the times likewise, both your private and public Character so much need this ornament and defence.

Use and habit in your private Character, one would hope, should naturally keep you attached to these pursuits: your Education (to enable

enable you to sustain with decency your public Character) having formed your mind to abstract reflexion; and given it the needful ply towards speculative meditation.

But unhappily, by too short a view of things, you have been apt to mistake the completion of your Academic Courses for the completion of your Theologic Studies: and then, by a false modesty, have despaired of knowing more than you would suffer those august Places of your education to teach you.

Were it not for such mistakes as these, your habits, concurring with the leisure so bountifully bestowed upon your station, would have enabled the former impulse to keep you moving in that literary course; till fresh impulses from increasing Knowledge had fixed you steadily in that Orb which you are appointed to enlighten and adorn.

And this *LEISURE*, which is so peculiarly your own, is not, like the other means of Knowledge, to be employed with indifference, or neglected with impunity. You may cast aside your Books: You may withdraw yourselves from learned instruction; and still possess your ignorance undisturbed. But your *Leisure*, like those *Spirits* which Magicians are said to raise, and know not how to set on work, will haunt and terrify you till you find it in employment; if not to the benefit of your neighbour, yet, like those wicked Spirits, to his harm and mischief. For nothing is more dreadful to the Imagination than *TIME* still attendant and unoccupied.

Lay-gentlemen have many advantages of you in the disposition of their *leisure*; if they neglect to employ it usefully, they may yet waste it without much scandal. The decency, the dignity of your Profession will not suffer you to be the Companion of their usual sports and dissipations. Nay, could you in honour partake in their amusements, yet the slender provision for the support of your Order will disable you from figuring amongst them in such a way as only a Gentleman would choose.

Now here, the noblest, as well as cheapest amusement (if you should happen to mistake Letters for nothing more) lies open to  
you.

you. An amusement, which, unlike those other inglorious ways of eluding *the business of life*, neither clouds the mind, nor enervates the body : But gives strength to the corporeal, and adds vigour to the intellectual faculties ; for application to Letters leads us into the habits of temperance ; and advances in Philosophy help us to subdue the more disorderly Passions. Hence the profession of Learning is seen, above all others, to reward its followers with *length of days* ; a vigorous old age being observed to be the more peculiar lot of revered Letters.

Nor is it merely *long life* which a pursuit of learning procures : for *long life*, without honour, the generous mind would disdain to make its choice. No ; WISDOM provides more amply for its votaries. *Happy* (says the illustrious King of Israel) *is he that findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth Understanding: length of days is in her hand, and in her right hand RICHES AND HONOUR* \*. And, in times like these, so eagerly aspiring to the prize of superior Knowledge, who will dare to suspect that *riches and honour* are not the constant fruits of mens' successful studies ?

But be this as it may. A noble mind will pursue *Wisdom*, let the reward of his attainment of it be never so uncertain ; since a Churchman, who neglects to gain honour by Letters, is sure to fall into Contempt. If a Lay-gentleman, of no learned Profession, chooses to be illiterate, he lives without a species of reputation, which few esteem a defect in his Character. If a Lay-gentleman of a learned Profession be found thus wanting, he is only neglected and forgotten : But let a Clergyman be once noted for his ignorance, and so strong is either the general malignity to his Order, or the enforced sense men have of its inward dignity, that such a one is held up, through life, for the common object of contempt and derision.

These are the motives which should dispose you, as Gentlemen, brought up in the study of Letters, to persevere in the same pur-

\* Prov. iii. 13.

suit, for the support and ornament of your Character. But as Men professing *sacred Learning*, there are others still more forceable. The honour and reputation attending the acquirement of *Wisdom* is now no longer a mere personal concern; it reflects honour and reputation on the Body to which you belong. Yet still, this is to be understood only of those studies which relate immediately to your Ministry. For a Clergyman to follow other studies, is, in the attempt, disreputable, as it has the look of neglecting or deserting the interests of your own Body: It is, in the issue, fruitless, as the stage to which men arrive in studies foreign to their Profession is rarely considerable. Let a Churchman busy himself in Law, and his ambition must terminate in a tolerable Justice of the Quorum. Let him amuse himself in the art of Physic, and he never rises higher than a Village-Doctor.

By this fantastic desertion of the studies of his Calling, he transgresses likewise one of the plainest precepts of moral duty. Every member of a Society lies under a tacit obligation to consult in the first place, the reputation, honour, and benefit of that Society. But this duty can be discharged no otherwise by us, than in prosecuting such studies as may best serve to illustrate and support those principles of knowledge and wisdom on which the practice of the Profession is established.

Yet further: Such an one not only stands indebted to his Society, but likewise to himself. Every Particular is, by the same rule of moral duty, obliged to examine carefully the grounds of his Profession, to enable him to discharge that personal service to which he bound himself when he entered into it.

The Lawyer, who employs his time in Natural and Mathematical enquiries, will be ill qualified to adjust the due degrees of moral evidence, on which the interest of his Clients principally depends: And the Physician who turns Poet, since the use of *Charms* hath been separated from the art of healing, will need (and must expect no other) a Patient with as warm an imagination as his own.

Far higher interests than these are intrusted to our care : and therefore far greater attention is required in the support of them. So that no honest Churchman will be lightly drawn away by foreign studies, when seen for what they are. He may be accidentally deluded, when they wear the face of relation to his own. Thus Church-History making an important part of our theologic studies, the *Antiquarian*, who delights to solace himself in the benighted days of Monkish Owl-light, sometimes passes for the *Divine*. But while he flies from the sublime Knowledge of modern times, and yet never goes back far enough to seize the pure and simple truths of primitive Christianity, he soon betrays his adulterate species.

But what will be of more force than all, to hold you attached to the proper studies of your Profession, is to keep in mind those sacred engagements which you so solemnly contracted with Heaven, when you first entered on your Ministry, *to devote yourselves* entirely to the service of Religion. And surely you can never think that this service may be effectually discharged without the succours of such parts of *human wisdom* as are most fitted to enlarge the Understanding, and to enrich the Mind with the knowledge of the Divine Nature, and of its own.

There never was an Age of the Church, when this learned Apparatus was not necessary to the work of the Ministry ; for no Age hath been exempt from the folly or impiety of perverse Opinions. Some have had more need of this shining Panoply than others ; but none ever wanted it so much, and was, at the same time, so ill supplied as the present.

BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION, and FANATICISM, have, in every age, corrupted the integrity, stained the purity, and dishonoured the sobriety of the Gospel ; so that there was always full employment for human Wisdom and Science to support the truth and dignity of our holy Religion. But in these miserable times, LEARNING ITSELF hath been made to apostatize, and to bear arms against  
its

its own interests. For dire *Fanaticism*, hitherto content to pollute THEOLOGY, hath now taken a wider range, and ostentatiously attempted to draw over both PHILOSOPHY and CRITICISM (the specific remedies of her disorders) to her party. So that now we have not only, as of old, a Fanatic Theology amongst our Field-preachers, but a Fanatic species of Philosophy excogitated by Mr. Law, and a Fanatic species of Criticism, under the controul of Mr. Hutchinsohn.

Besides these Enemies of our REASON, we have likewise upon our hands the Common Enemy of our HOPES; who, from every quarter, and under various names, makes bands apart to assault the Ordinances of Heaven; such as the *Freetinker*, who attacks Revelation obliquely, under the cover of Scepticism; such as the *Deist*, who defies it openly with the blunted Arms of overworn Sophistry; and such as the *Naturalist*, who would involve all in one common ruin, by his blasphemies against the moral Government of God.

From what fatal concurrence of circumstances these Principles came to infect the body of the Common People (Principles, till of late, confined to a few Particulars, perverted by a *bad Philosophy*, and still further corrupted by *worse Morals*), how this, I say, came about, it is not my purpose to explain to you in this place. I have already said enough upon it, on other occasions. It is sufficient that sad experience informs you of the fact.

Now though the *fashionable World* might support itself for a time, on Principles which, from their novelty and boldness, flatter its vanity, and keep it easy in its vices; yet the *Common People* could never remain long without a Religion of some sort or other. Hence arose new evils, and fresh employment for the Ministers of the Gospel.

A Religion (as we say) the People, however debauched or misled, must always have, though it be only to swear or to cheat by. A return to that rational and established System, which they had

so wantonly cast aside, is never to be expected, after having abused the exercise of that Reason which first brought them to embrace, and which (till that abuse) had kept them steadily attached to it. Their Passions now governed, under the leading of *Superstition* and *Fanaticism*: and as each man's temperature disposed him to listen to the One or the Other of these Seducers, there were Emissaries at hand to take advantage of the prevailing infirmity.—Of their Superstition, the indefatigable Agents of Rome secretly availed themselves: and the Field-preachers openly set fire to their Fanaticism.

Great Cities, where only a true judgment of the general bent of a People can be made, are at present full of complaints of the vast numbers daily seduced to Popery and Methodism.

To make head, therefore, against this torrent of evils, the most improved abilities, and the most unwearied diligence, are but just sufficient. We have now, to deal with the Sophisms of Infidelity, the Authority of Papistry, and the Jargon of Methodism. And though bad Logic may ask much dexterity to unravel; and old Prescription may require much erudition to expose its rotten grounds; yet Spiritual gibberish is still better intrenched, and harder to be approached, for its having no weak side of common sense;

—*recalcitrat undique tutus.*

These motives, to minds like yours, will, I am sure, give redoubled vigour to your studies. I wish I could honestly encourage you by another; which only such Minds deserve to have objected to them, and which baser natures think of more worth than all the rest; I mean, *the rewards attendant upon Letters*. All States have indeed provided for them: But Statesmen of all times have found it necessary to divert this sinking fund, more or less, from its proper designation, to their own temporary occasions. There is but one Season in which merit in our Profession bears a price in the public market; and that, no good man would wish to see return;

I mean,

I mean, one of those *State Revolutions*, when, for the sake, or on pretence of LIBERTY civil and religious, both the Crown and the Constitution are put in hazard. Then, indeed, as in a time of common danger, the People grow serious; they fly to the Altars, and take refuge under the wings of the ablest and most approved Dispensers of the established Faith; who now, become of civil use to prop a shaken Throne, are brought forward even by Ministers of State. At all other times, these Rewards, although provided by every political Institution, are yet rarely dispensed in the *administration* of any of them.

Let us expect then nothing from Learning, but what Learning itself is able to bestow: That serene pleasure which accompanies the progress, and that happiness which crowns the end, of our Labours. For though, like all other, even the best of human pursuits, the first advances may be attended with anxiety and pain; yet, unlike all other, the delight which flows from increasing Knowledge, through the *habit* of investigating TRUTH, is as pure and undisturbed as it is warm and rapturous. In all other rational pursuits the pleasure arises from the End; the Means being still accompanied with disgust: here it springs alike both from the End and Means: and, as in the advancing Work of Creation, where *good* accompanied every step of the progress, the *Labour*, and the *rest from Labour*, were equally *blessed*. All pleasure comes from, and results into, our intellectual feelings. Many species of it are conveyed through perverse, many through corrupted channels. But the irradiating influx of *sacred Truth* comes directly from its source; and is received by the chaste and enlightned mind with holy raptures, as in its native Sanctuary. In a word, the state of growing Knowledge is, to the SAGE carried up in divine and moral speculations, no other than a state of happiness.

Such are the powerful and alluring motives to proceed in the proper Learning of your Profession. But, without some Advices to direct your course, the laying these exhortations before you

would do me but little credit, and produce as slender benefit to yourselves.

I shall proceed therefore, as my leisure may enable me, and your attention give me encouragement, to hazard my further thoughts on this important subject. Much experience, and not a little reflection, may have rendered me not totally unqualified for this undertaking. And, proper DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY, is, in the present state of things, I will suppose, no less *necessary* than difficult.

The usual time you sojourn in the UNIVERSITIES is very laudably employed in the prosecution of such studies as are to fit you for your *Degrees*. Some of these are foreign to the learning of your Profession; others but remotely relative to it. So that, what between the increasing expences of the *Age*, rather than of the *Place*, and the daily wants of a fresh supply for the Ministry, the greater part of you are turned out into the World before those incomparable Establishments have put the last hand to your Education, and led you through the more sacred parts of the Temple of Wisdom.

It is true, you no sooner step into the World than you have your wants abundantly supplied. Instructors crowd in upon you from all quarters. And, just as on Man's Entrance into life, in the famed table of Cebes, every false species of happiness presents itself before him, each striving who shall first get possession of the new Comer; so, on your Entry on the Ministry, every Phantom of false Science, raised up at the resistless call of the Sages in St. Paul's Church-yard, open wide their hospitable arms, to receive you to their daily, their weekly, and their monthly Lectures. What shining Collections of polite Literature! What weighty Volumes of profound Criticism have crowned their generous Labours! But in *Scriptural abundance*, their unsparing bounty chiefly displays itself: Commentaries, Histories, and even Dictionaries of the HOLY BIBLE, keep rolling down upon you, from the same perennial Source.

Source. While the smaller Divinity, like *the flies and lice of Egypt from the dust of the land*, meets you in your dish, and lies hid in all you taste and handle. The artful disguise, too, is no less taking than the plenty. And, as Flaminius's Host of Chalcis entertained his Guest with a magnificent variety of Viands, and all from the Hog-sty, so the whole of this delicious cookery comes from as dirty a place, I mean, a Bookseller's Garret.

While you retain any tincture of that noble Learning with which you were imbued, in those pure Fountains of Science, which you left too soon, you will be in no danger from the delusions of these miserable Impostors, *ἐν αἰσθανομένων τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίας*, as Origen elegantly expresses it, where he characterizes certain false Teachers of the same stamp. In this temper, you will be prepared for, and indeed worthy of, better Instruction. Whether my mediocrity shall be able to impart it, must be left to Time, and to your use of it, to determine. Till then, you need not blush to recollect and bear in mind what you once learnt at School,

“ Virtus est VITIUM FUGERE, et sapientia prima

“ STULTITIA CARUISSE.”——



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D I R E C T I O N S

FOR THE

S T U D Y O F T H E O L O G Y.

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D I R E C T I O N S

FOR THE

S T U D Y O F T H E O L O G Y .

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P A R T T H E F I R S T .

**T**HE Husbandman, before he commits the good seed to the Ground, tills it with repeated labour. The mind, as the foil, over-run with idle trash, where the vilest weeds of literature are mistaken for its flowers and fruit, requires the same kind of culture : it is to be well cleared before you can, with any reasonable hopes, intrust the great and useful Truths of Religion to the rankness of its bosom.

## S E C T. I.

**T**O give it this preparation, therefore, I would first of all recommend to the young student the daily and long continued use of

*Locke on Human Understanding,*

and

*The Institutions of Quintilian.*

The one will teach him to think justly; and the other, to express his thoughts with correctness and elegance; without which qualities, Science is but learned lumber, a burthen to the owner, and a nuisance to every body else. These two writers, possessing in a sovereign degree these excellent talents which they undertake to impart, are, of all others, best able, both by precept and example, to accomplish what they undertake; which is no other than to make *science* subservient to Truth, in the discovery and communication of it to others; the peculiar office of a Minister of the Gospel.

## S E C T. II.

**N***A*TURAL Law and *Natural Religion* are the foundation of, and therefore the necessary introduction to, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

For a general view of *Natural Law*, I should prefer *Grotius's* book, *De jure belli & pacis*, to all the numerous writers on the same subject; though some of them be more scientific and philosophical; for He, perpetually illustrating his precepts by examples, not only teaches, what men should be, but what they are: without which full knowledge, our contemplations on *moral entities* are apt to grow too refined and visionary.

For

For a general view of *Natural Religion*, as distinguished, though it cannot be separated, from *Natural Law*, the most useful, I think, is *Wollaston's Treatise of The Religion of Nature delineated*; for although he has placed moral obligation on very fanciful grounds, yet the solidity of those duties, which he hath shewn, in so just and elegant a manner, to arise out of *natural Religion*, is not at all diminished by that airy speculation.

But as the great Pillar of *Natural Law* is *Moral obligation*; and of *Natural Religion*, the *Being and attributes of God*, there are two capital Books I would here recommend to our Student, to compleat his ideas of this Law and Religion; which are, *Cumberland on the Law of Nature*, and *Cudworth's Intellectual System*. These, on some other accounts, might be commodiously placed elsewhere; yet on the whole they may, perhaps, be read with most profit, after the two books of *Grotius* and *Wollaston*.

Those incomparable works of *Cumberland* and *Cudworth* were, it is true, written in confutation of *Hobbes's* Philosophy; which then threatened, like a later and ruder attempt, to overthrow all the received *Morality* and *Metaphysics* of the ancient and modern world. But their method of *polemic writing* (for such, indeed, it was) deserves commendation, as best answering their general end; while they overlooked the personal singularities of their adversary, and turned themselves to the abstract questions.—In *Cumberland*, *Hobbes* met with a very superior Reasoner; and in *Cudworth*, a far more accomplished Scholar. Both of them, indeed, inferior to that *Pest* of Science, sacred and prophane, in elegance of composition and in purity and splendour of language. On which account, I should advise, that *Cumberland* be read, not in his own ungracious Latin, but in *Barbeyrac's* excellent translation into French.—For the same, and for a further reason, I should prefer *Mosheim's* Latin translation of the *Intellectual System*, to the English original; that is to say, not only for its purity and elegance, but for its great abundance and excellence of learned notes.

*Cumberland* excells all men in fixing the true grounds of *moral obligation* ; out of which, *Natural Law* and *Natural Religion*, both, arise.

*Cudworth* takes a larger and sublimer range : he begins with *Metaphysics*, which employs what we now have of the famous work of the *Intellectual System*.

In exhausting the Metaphysic questions concerning the *Being and Nature of the Deity*, he hath occasionally given us a compleat History of Ancient Learning as far as relates to those Inquiries : which, besides the particular use in the order of the *course*, will be of this further advantage to our student, the throwing great lights on what he finds delivered concerning *one God and one Lord* in the Old and New Testament, when he now comes, after these preparations, to the direct study of the *Sacred Writings* ; the proper end of his labours, the gaining a *true Knowledge of Revealed Religion*.

### S E C T. III.

NOW, though the *Mosaic Religion*, to which we come, be no where to be learnt, but in the *Old Testament* ; nor the *Christian*, but in the *New* ; yet it may be convenient for us to know, what ideas those learned men, who are believed to have most successfully studied the *Sacred Books*, have entertained of both : not with a purpose to acquiesce in their labours, but to facilitate our own ; not for our guides, whom we are implicitly to follow in a road as yet to ourselves unknown ; but for our *Counsellors* or *Assistants*, who are ready to lay before us what they conceive of the *Carte du pays* in general ; which our student may use or correct for his own advantage, as he goes along.

There are not many who have applied themselves, in good earnest, to assist us in our knowledge of the *Mosaic Law* ; and most of these, very unsuccessfully. From the Jewish Doctors, we derive  
much

much less instruction than might have been expected. Yet, to one of these it must be confessed, we owe what we have of what is most considerable on this subject; I mean a *Rationale* of the Jewish *Ritual*; which essential part of the Mosaic Law had been long the stumbling-block of Infidelity; and was likely to continue so; when, in the first flourishing times of the *Saracene* Empire, a great number of Jews (as we learn from *William of Paris*, in his book *de Legibus*) devoting themselves to the study of the Aristotelian Philosophy (then cultivated by these followers of Mahomet with a kind of Scientific rage), and thereby contracting an inquisitive and disputatious habit, set themselves on examining into *the Reasons of the Jewish Laws*; which being unable to discover, they, with their usual levity, concluded, that they were futile, absurd, and of human original; and so apostatised, in great numbers, from the religion of their Fathers, to Mahometanism.

To put a stop to this evil, the famous *Maimonides* wrote, with much success, the book called *Ductor Dubitantium*; the chief purpose of which is to explain *the causes of the Jewish Ritual*.

On this ground, our excellent Countryman, *Spencer*, long afterwards, when the Rabbi's book had been almost forgotten, erected his admirable book intituled, *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*. This, though confined to an illustration of the *Ritual Law*, is, by far, the most considerable attempt yet made to explain the nature and genius of the *Mosaic Religion*: while the other capital parts of this Dispensation, such as the nature of its civil Government, a *Theocracy*;—the rewards and punishments, peculiar to it;—its extraordinary administration by appointed Agents, endowed with supernatural powers, and with the gifts of *Miracles* and *Prophecy*;—the *double sense* in which the latter was necessarily involved; and the language consequent to its nature and use: these things, I say, of such importance to the successful study of the Old Testament, have been hitherto treated, not only superficially, but absurdly. Yet notwithstanding, as the *Ritual Law* constitutes so considerable a part of the *Mosaic Dispensation*, *Spencer's* book is of infinite use,  
not

not only for its own appropriated excellence, but for the subject's necessarily leading him to a very detailed account of the religious state of the ancient Pagan world, without which knowledge we can have but a very imperfect idea of the *Jewish Law and History*. The scarcity of good Writers on the Old Testament shews how necessary it is to make the best of the incomparable Author of the book *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*. After this, the Student having furnished himself with *Walton's Polyglott Bible*, and the large Collection called *Critici Sacri*, may proceed directly to his great Work, the Study of the Bible.

#### S E C T. IV.

IF it be hard to *find* good Writers on the *Old Law*, it is as hard to *chuse* out of the great Number on the *New*.

In our Study of the Gospel, our wants are not so great, and our assistances much greater. Though it be the purpose of these slight hints to recommend the BIBLE as the genuine *mine*, inexhausted and inexhaustible, from whence all our Treasures of Theology are to be fetched, and which consequently is to be principally explored, while we turn our backs on all the *Sums* and *Systems* of Artificial Divines; yet a general acquaintance with the two Dispensations, procured as we can, may, in the entrance on our Work, somewhat ease our Labour.

After what has been said of a manuduction to the Study of the *Old Testament*, I would only recommend, from amongst the crude abundance on the *New*, two short tracts, *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*; and Dr. Burnet of the Charter-house, his *De Fide et Officiis Christianorum*; the first of these tracts being a kind of prelude or introduction to the other. They are both of them excellent in their different kinds. So that when our Student has done this, nothing remains but that he may enter directly on the study of the *New Testament*, which he will  
now

now find prepared to receive him as a well-qualified Guest. And *Grotius's* Critical Comment on the *Gospels*, and *Locke* on the *Epistles*, accompanying this Study, will open all the treasures of our Faith to one so happily employed. What, after the use of these two Commentators, will be wanting for further illustration, must be sought for in the Collection called the *Sacred Critics*, before recommended, amongst the Critics on the *New Testament*.

Only, in the study of *The Revelation of St. John*, from whence may be deduced the most illustrious and irrefragable Evidence of the Divinity of our holy Religion, the works of Mr. Joseph Mede, whose Comments on the *Apocalypse* is, indeed, in Theology, what *Harvey's* discovery of the circulation of the blood was thought to be in Physics, should be carefully digested.

This labour, on the New Testament, well over, our Student may then, but not before, read with advantage some of the many Bodies, or *Institutes*, as they are called, of Christian Theology. The best I know of is, for its elegance, clearness, and freedom from partial affections of all sorts, that of the great *Episcopus*, though unfinished; the parts wanting may be well supplied from *Limborch's Theologia Christiana*; a master-piece, which, in its kind, may be well compared to a work of Raphael's finished by Julio Romano.

## S E C T. V.

HAVING proceeded thus far in our *Course*, and gone through that part of *Theology* called the *positive* or *dogmatic*, our Student's next step will be to provide a guard or defense for the security of his acquirements; which is to be done by the assistance of the other part, called the *Polemic*; which of late indeed ignorance has brought into discredit, from the general decay of critical and dialectic Learning.

1. He will begin with a defence of *Revelation in general*, as it lies in *Grotius de Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, enlarged by *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*; which may be considered as a kind of Commentary on the other's text: the just encomiums of which have so long satiated the public ear, that we now hear of that with indifference in which our Fathers so much triumphed. But the book I mean is that written by Mr. Stillingfleet; not that unfinished work which bears the same title, written when he became Bishop of Worcester.

2. From thence, he will go on to a defence of the *Christian Religion* against *Judaism*. For which he will need no other instruction than what he may find in *Limborch's* work, intituled, *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ Amica Collatio cum Erudito Judæo*. This was Isaac Orobio, a Spanish Jew, who, escaping from the prisons of the Inquisition, now practised Physic in Holland. In this Disputation will be found all that the stretch of human parts on the one hand, or Science on the other, can produce, to varnish error, or to unravel sophistry. All the Papers of Orobio in defence of Judaism, as opposed to Christianity, are here given at large, with Limborch's answers, section by section: where the subtlest sophisms of a very superior genius will be found ably and satisfactorily detected and exposed by the strong, profound, and clear reasoning of this celebrated Remonstrant.

3. The defence of the *Reformed Churches* against *Popery* is next in order, and our Student will find it compleatly performed in that master-piece of human reasoning, Chillingworth's book against Knott, intituled, *The Religion of Protestants a safe way to salvation*; in which he will see all the school jargon of that subtle Jesuit incomparably exposed; and the long dispute between the two churches, for the first time, placed upon its proper immovable ground, the BIBLE alone, after the extravagant Authority of the *Fathers*, perpetually appealed to by both Churches, had long usurped the prerogatives of Scripture; and, by breaking down the boundaries betwixt right and wrong, had made the Controversy endless.

And

And having here recommended to our Student's most careful attention these two capital works of *Limborch* against the *Jew*, and *Chillingworth* against the *Jesuit*, it presents a fit occasion to take notice of that ignorant censure of *Polemic Divinity*, now so fashionable even amongst those whose Profession might have enabled them to know better, as if it were the offspring of the Philosophy and Divinity of the *Schools*; when they might see that the futility of Scholastic Learning was never more effectually held up to derision, in the persons of those two subtile Disputants (who were overrun with it) than by these incomparable Defenders of Christianity and Protestantism.

4. From the Defense of *Protestantism* in general, we come next to that of the *Church of England*, against the *Sectaries*. And here it will suffice, *inftar omnium*, to study *Hooker's four first Books of Ecclesiastical Policy*; in which, an *established Church* is immovably fixed on this great *Principle*, That the *outward Policy of a Church*, though divinely instituted, is in the class, and of the species of those Laws, which even the sacred Authority, that enjoins them, does not render immutable. A work bearing all the marks of immortality, as destined to excite the admiration of men while good letters remain amongst them.

## S E C T. VI.

BUT Polemic Divinity, though of the best sort, being apt to give a rigid turn to the sentiments of those long engaged in it, we may, by this time, find it necessary to remind our Student, that though the *means* be Learning, yet the *end of the commandment is Charity*, and that the truest badge of our being the Servants of one Common Master is our mutual forbearance of one another. Now this Charity is violated by *restraint* and *intolerance*: whether exercised by a Church to its own Members; or towards those who have renounced its jurisdiction.

1. The injustice of the first kind, is combated and exposed in a very masterly manner by Bishop Taylor in his *Liberty of Prophecy*, and by Bishop Stillingfleet in his *Irenicum*. Taylor wrote when the Church of England was groaning under the tyranny of the Puritans or Presbyterians; and, therefore, to remind them of their own claims, under the like oppressive Circumstances, he intitles his Apology the *Liberty of Prophecy*, under which name they chose to ennoble their *Lectures*. Stillingfleet wrote when the established Church was on the recovery of its legal rights; and, finding it sharpened by long injuries and indignities, he endeavoured to allay the heats of his Brethren, by his *Irenicum*; both these writers pleading for religious Liberty; the one when it was violated by oppression; the other when it was in danger from fresh resentments. Yet it is not to be denied or disguised that these celebrated Writers, either not yet comprehending the doctrine of *Toleration in its full extent*, or perhaps not finding the minds of men sufficiently enlarged to receive it (which, though a truth, from its coincidence with the genius of Christianity, one would have expected to find amongst the first received in an Established Church, was unhappily amongst the last); they cramped the doctrine within too narrow bounds, while, to avoid scandal, they thought it of use to distinguish in laboured discourses between points fundamental and not fundamental; which, though impertinent to the true decision of the question of Toleration, yet accidentally let in much light into the true nature of Christianity.

2. The injustice of the second kind, the oppressive treatment of Dissenters or Sectaries, gave occasion for the question of *Toleration* to be more fully and compleatly handled by Mr. Locke in his celebrated *Letters* on that subject; and by Mr. Bayle in his no less celebrated *Comment*, on the words, *compel them to enter in*. These four Works should be very carefully studied. They give a compleat view of the Subject. Such, who have wrote since in support of the Divine Principle of *Toleration*, may be said, only, *actum agere*.

The enemies of pure Religion have *defiled* Revelation, each on his own peculiar principles : but friends and enemies have concurred in *dishonouring* it, by one common principle, held occasionally by all in their turns—the *Antichristian Doctrine of Persecution and intolerance*. Now, the Books here recommended expose it in all its iniquity and folly.

## S E C T. VII.

FROM the *interior Spirit* of our holy Religion, which is constant and unchangeable, we come to the *outward face* of it, whose features have, both by time and climate, been ever on the change ; nor has time, from the infancy to the old age of the Church, brought on greater disparities in its looks than the intemperature of Climates, which have been the scenes of Ecclesiastical occurrences. The ill-sorted Pictures with which Church-history is adorned, serve at once for the opprobrium and the glory of Religion.

Order requires that the Student should first take a view of the *general History of the Church* ; and *convenience* points to us, that he should begin with some well-chosen abridgment. There is only one that deserves our commendation ; but that one is indeed incomparable : It is written by the very learned Mosheim, in elegant Latin. Amongst the various excellencies of his method, I shall only mention this, his referring, on every subject, to the best writers who have treated it at large : so that whenever information excites the Student to look into the Authors referred to by Mosheim, he is sure to find the solution of his doubts, or satisfaction to his curiosity.

From the *History of the Church in General*, the nature of the course directs our Student to the *general History of the Church of England*.

But our repeated complaints of the defective state of this part of Literature amongst us, extends to the *ecclesiastical* as well as to the

*civil* History of Great Britain. There are only two writers of the general History of our Church who deserve the name of Historians, Collier the Nonjuror, and Fuller the Jester.

The first hath written with sufficient dignity, elegance, and spirit; but hath dishonoured and debased his whole work with the absurd and slavish Tenets of the High Churchmen.

The other is composed with better temper, and on better principles; and with sufficient care and attention; but worked on a flight fantastic ground, and in a style of buffoon pleasantry altogether unsuitable to so grave and important a subject. Yet much may be learnt from both; much, indeed, to avoid, as well as to approve.

After this general view of Church History, the *Reformation* of Religion from the corruptions of Popery, the most important period of Church History, will deserve our particular attention.

The rise and progress of it may be best learnt from *Sleidan*, in his *De Statu Religionis & Reipublicæ Carolo V. Cæsare Commentarii*; more valuable for its veracity than for the charms of its composition.

To have a proper knowledge of that of our own Church, Burnet's much-applauded History of the Reformation of the Church of England, with his third volume of Explanations and Corrections, must be carefully read. Were we to estimate its value by the reception it met with from the two Houses of Parliament, when a whole People were frightened out of their wits by the imminent danger of Popery, we should rate it much too high. It is a sensible well-attested narrative of Facts, collected with Care, and digested with Candour.

## S E C T. VIII.

AND now we are arrived at the concluding labours of our young Divine, the imparting of that knowledge to others which with so much care and study he hath procured for himself. Amongst the many marks which distinguish the *Christian Philosopher* from the *Pagan*, this is one of the most striking—the *Pagan* sought knowledge in a selfish way, to secrete it for his own use: the *Christian* seeks it with the generous purpose (first in view, though last in execution) to impart it to others. The *Pagan Philosopher*, therefore, having cultivated the *art of thinking*, proceeds to that of *speaking*, in order to display his vanity in the dexterous use of deceit. On the other hand, the *Christian Philosopher* cultivates the *art of speaking*, for the sole purpose of disseminating the Truth, in his office of Preacher of the Gospel. That *species of eloquence*, therefore, which is only fitted for his use, is best described by an eminent Writer, who indeed makes it the *genus of the Art*: “True “Eloquence,” says he, “I find to be none but the serious and “hearty LOVE OF TRUTH: and that whose mind soever is fully “possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with “the DEAREST CHARITY to infuse the knowledge of them to “others, when such a man would speak, his words, like so many “nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in “well-ordered files, as he could wish, fall aptly into their own “places \*.”

This is the true *Christian Eloquence*; to which I would have our Student eagerly aspire; whatever route his talents lead him to take, in discharge of this part of his Ministry: whether his Discourse be employed in illustrating the sacred text—or in explaining and enforcing the capital duties of Morality—or lastly, in pressing, upon

\* Milton.

the conscience, the practical obligations both of natural and revealed Religion, by a pathetic address to the Passions and Affections of his hearers : For under one or other of these three heads, I suppose, may be comprised all the rational service of the Pulpit.

1. If his disposition incline him to the illustration of the sacred Text, which, in strict truth, is performing what by his office he has engaged himself to undertake, that is to say, *to preach the word of God*, the best model I can think of are the Sermons of Dr. Samuel Clarke, of St. James's, who is always plain, clear, accurate, and full.

2. If he rather chuses to expatiate on the great Duties of Morality, Dr. Barrow should be his principal Guide : whose comprehensive mind penetrates into the very darkeſt recesses of our nature, at the same time that the radiations of his genius gild the most solemn and gloomy prospects. In a word, his is that *true Eloquence* which Milton so happily describes, and which this Preacher so eminently possesses.

But yet we should not suspect, that Clarke is defective in what Barrow so eminently abounds ; or that Barrow, on fit occasions, neglects to cultivate that sacred soil from which Clarke reaped such abundant harvests.

3. A pathetic address to the passions and affections of penitent hearers, perhaps the most operative of all these various species of instruction, is that in which the English Pulpit, notwithstanding all its other superior advantages, is most defective. Here, the *persuasive* is apt to be barren of reasoning ; and the *pathetic* to degenerate into *cant*. A perfect model of this kind we must seek for abroad. Nor need we be long to seek, though we be forced to take up with a Papist, and, what is worse, a Jesuit—the celebrated Bourdaloue, who, to the most perfect sublime and pathetic, has occasionally added all the force of reason in the simplest and most beautiful method, in which will be found many excellent strokes of *scriptural criticism* and *moral divinity*, which so much ennoble the works of the two English Preachers above recommended for the execution

execution of their several methods. Nor will there be any danger that our Student, now so well armed at all points, by the truths collected in his Course, should be betrayed or entangled in the errors and corruptions, which have so miserably deformed the mother-church of this famous Preacher.

In conclusion, I confide in the young Divine, who resolves in good earnest to go through the course here recommended, that he will consider it as only the foundation of the learning of his profession; as only the out-lines on which he is to work through life, in order to deserve the Character (at which we will suppose he aims) of an *accomplished Divine*.

On this account, I have been exceeding sparing, in this *first part*, to recommend such Writers as are to aid him in his *Course*; omitting all but those of capital note, who, as he goes along, are of necessity to be well digested.

The SECOND PART \* therefore will be employed in an account, under each head, of those additional Writers, that may enable the Student to make himself a perfect Master of the several Subjects marked out in this; which though it may give him a just, yet, without further assistance, may remain a too general idea of his Business.

\* The *second part* has not been found among the Bishop's papers, and probably was never written. R. W.



## ERRORS OF THE PRESS IN VOL. V.

- P. 47. *l.* the last, after *which*, add a comma.  
48. *l.* 1. after *whole*, add a comma.  
94. *l.* 15. for *objects*, *r.* object.  
100. *l.* 1. after *scheme*, add a comma.  
120. *l.* 7. for *nothing*, *r.* nothing.  
147. *l.* 21. for *unto*, *r.* into.  
162. *l.* 22. *n.* for *varie*, *r.* *varif*.  
163. *l.* 8. *n.* for *plays*, *r.* *païs*.  
249. *n.* *l.* 5. for *péril*, *r.* *périr*.  
330. last line, for *set*, *r.* *set*.  
408. *l.* 16. for *took*, *r.* *too*.  
421. *l.* 2. from the bottom, for *possessions*, *r.* *possessions*.  
432. *n.* †. *l.* 4. for *sationes*, *r.* *sanationes*.

ERRORS OF THE PRESS IN VOL. V.

Page 1. The first error, and a common one.

Page 2. The second error, and a common one.

Page 3. The third error, and a common one.

Page 4. The fourth error, and a common one.

Page 5. The fifth error, and a common one.

Page 6. The sixth error, and a common one.

Page 7. The seventh error, and a common one.

Page 8. The eighth error, and a common one.

Page 9. The ninth error, and a common one.

Page 10. The tenth error, and a common one.

Page 11. The eleventh error, and a common one.

Page 12. The twelfth error, and a common one.

Page 13. The thirteenth error, and a common one.

Page 14. The fourteenth error, and a common one.

Page 15. The fifteenth error, and a common one.

Page 16. The sixteenth error, and a common one.

Page 17. The seventeenth error, and a common one.

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Page 19. The nineteenth error, and a common one.

Page 20. The twentieth error, and a common one.

Page 21. The twenty-first error, and a common one.

Page 22. The twenty-second error, and a common one.

Page 23. The twenty-third error, and a common one.

Page 24. The twenty-fourth error, and a common one.

Page 25. The twenty-fifth error, and a common one.

Page 26. The twenty-sixth error, and a common one.

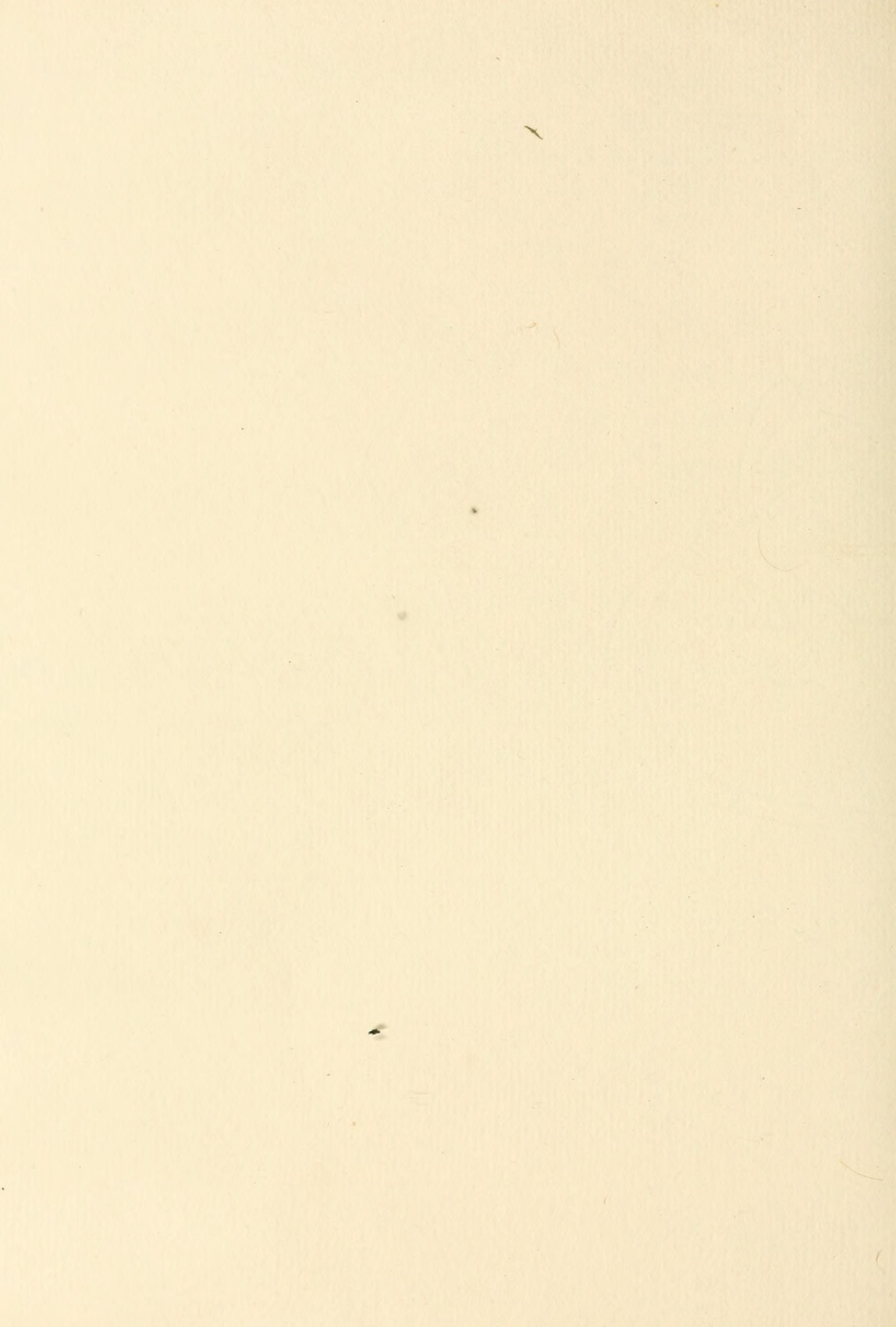
Page 27. The twenty-seventh error, and a common one.

Page 28. The twenty-eighth error, and a common one.

Page 29. The twenty-ninth error, and a common one.

Page 30. The thirtieth error, and a common one.









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